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MACWORLD.COM'S TOP 5

The top 5 stories on Macworld.com are:

1 **Frankenmac! What's in a Mac Clone?**
Tired of waiting and hoping for the Mac of his dreams to appear, Rob Griffiths decided to build it himself (macworld.com/3567).

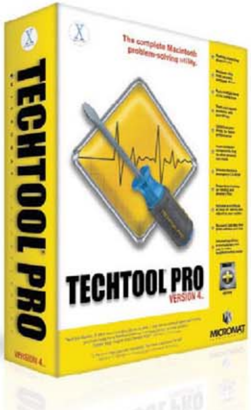
2 **Preview's Hidden Powers**
Apple's Preview is more than just a program for reading PDFs, viewing graphics, and running slide shows (macworld.com/3568).

3 **Word 2008 vs. Pages '08**
Is Apple's Pages a viable alternative to Microsoft Word? Jeffrey Battersby finds out (macworld.com/3569).

4 **The Browser Bunch**
What constitutes a solid Web browser these days? We take a fresh look at ten browsers for OS X (macworld.com/3570).

5 **Excel 2008 vs. Numbers '08**
Rob Griffiths compares Apple's spreadsheet program with Microsoft Excel (macworld.com/3571).

(Ranking valid as of April 24, 2008.)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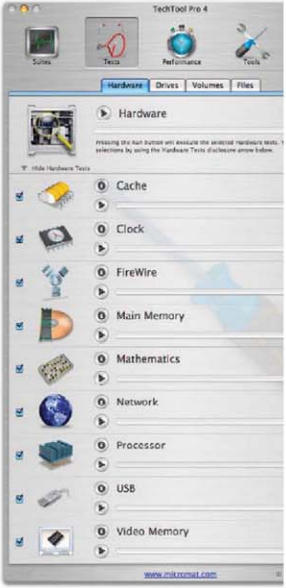
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK By Jason Snell

Heavyweight Inboxing

Changing e-mail habits, and wishing the iMac a happy birthday

I began using Eudora, my first Mac e-mail program, in 1993. Fifteen years and countless tens of thousands of messages later, I vowed to change my e-mail ways, all because of Penelope and Merlin.

A Time of Crisis

Two years ago, Qualcomm announced that future versions of Eudora would be based on Mozilla's Thunderbird client; the migration project is called Penelope (see wiki.mozilla.org/Penelope). With the demise of the "classic" Eudora, the program I'd been using for so many years, it became clear that I was going to have to make some major changes in my e-mail life.

Those changes included finding a new e-mail client; I'm using Apple's Mail for now. I also had to alter my e-mail habits.

That's when Merlin Mann entered the picture. Proprietor of the 43 Folders Web site (www.43folders.com), Mann over the past couple of years has been extolling the virtues of a process he calls Inbox Zero (www.43folders.com/izero). Without repeating too much of Merlin's pitch—check out his site—let me summarize how I now try to manage my mail.

Many of us learned how to use e-mail in a different era, a time when we didn't receive hundreds of messages a week. We'd store our mail in hierarchies of mailboxes and folders. After reading our messages, we'd manually file them in those boxes and folders; the clever among us built custom filters to do the filing automatically.

That all worked for a while. But over the years, the volume of e-mail has exploded, and those old ways of managing it have been hard-pressed to keep up.

Mann's advice? Forget all the folders. Instead, go through your inbox regularly, flagging messages that need further action and filing everything else away in a big archive. Use smart folders and targeted searches to find those archived messages if and when you need to.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BELANGER

It became clear that I was going to have to make some major changes in my e-mail life.

Using Mann's techniques, you can in fact achieve an empty inbox—what he calls Inbox Zero. It's a radical idea.

Some of Mann's specific suggestions don't work for me. But I've incorporated other of his suggestions into my daily e-mail routine, using clever tools like InDev Software's Mail Act-On (indev.ca/MailActOn.html) to process my messages with just a few keystrokes. I think my inbox and I are the better for it. My Inbox may not be at Zero, but it's smaller than it used to be.

Even if you don't religiously follow the Inbox Zero path, you can do plenty of things to change the way you manage e-mail, saving yourself time and making yourself more productive. In this issue's "Empty Your Inbox" (page 64), we've got lots of suggestions.

And if, like me, you're feeling like you've stuck with your old e-mail program too long, we've got you covered there, too: In "The E-mail Edge" (page 32), Nathan Alderman reviews the usual suspects (Mail and Entourage), as well as up-and-coming Mac mail programs *and* the latest in Web mail (Gmail and Yahoo Mail).

Happy Birthday, iMac

May 6, 1998, was a Wednesday. As I did most Wednesdays, I was working at home that day, when I got a call from my boss's assistant instructing me to hurry in to the office. Which means I was probably not wearing long pants when I first heard about the iMac.

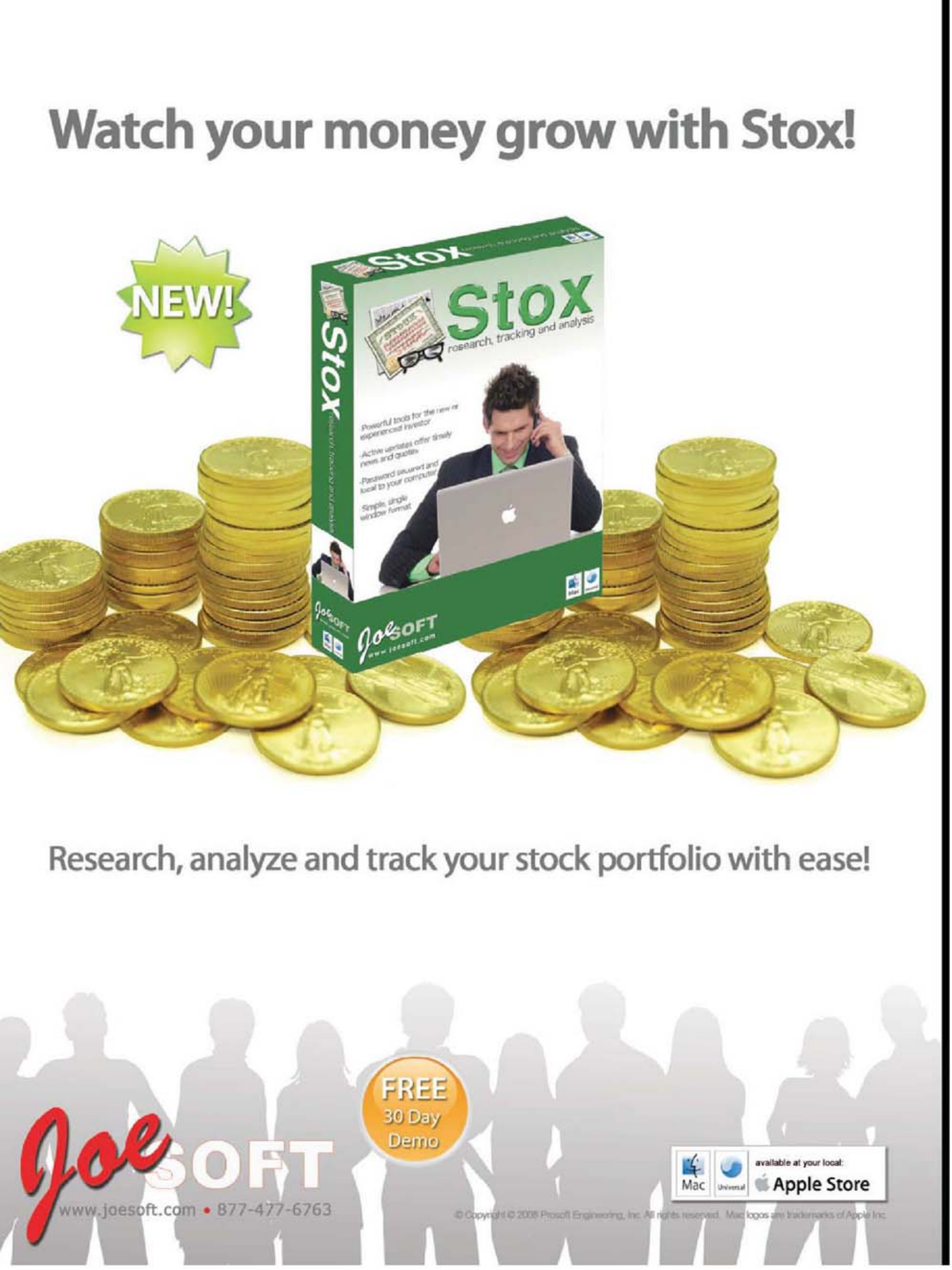
Ten years ago, nobody did live Web coverage of Apple's new-product announcements. In fact, few people really cared about what Apple had up its sleeve. But on that day, Apple did something huge. It unveiled the product that would help the company get back on its feet and begin the ten-year string of successful product launches that culminated in the iPod and the iPhone.

I don't think it's unreasonable to suggest that without the iMac, Apple would be either out of business or vastly different. Today, the company controls one of the most celebrated brands in the world. And the iMac was the first Apple product to truly bear the stamp of Steve Jobs, as well as designer Jonathan Ive, both of whom have spent the last decade driving Apple on to even more impressive creations.

Ten years later, the iMac is still with us, though it has transmogrified from a 233MHz CRT-based all-in-one system into today's 3.06GHz flat-panel computer (macworld.com/3619).

Want to see what we thought of the iMac back then? Visit Macworld.com to see our July 1998 cover story in all its retro glory (macworld.com/3620) and read the editor-in-chief's column from that issue (macworld.com/3621). If you're at all interested in the history of the Mac, it's fascinating stuff.

Let me know what you think in the Macworld Forums (forums.macworld.com/) or via e-mail at jason_snell@macworld.com. Or you can join the conversation by following me on Twitter (twitter.com/jsnell).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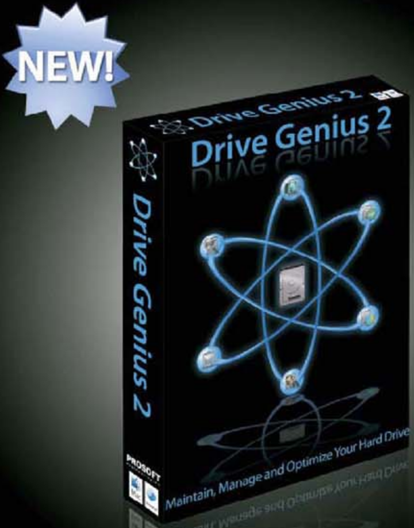
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Running from Office

Microsoft Office 2008 meets with some less-than-enthusiastic reviews

Office Animosity

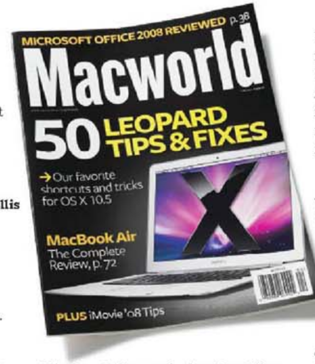
Microsoft rewards our four-year wait for Office 2008 (*Reviews,* April 2008) by removing VBA macros from Excel? I won't be upgrading if it means trashing the hard work I put into developing macros for wine-list management, golf-score calculators, and tax calculators.

Ron Ellis

Not only does Excel 2008 not support VBA, but its graphs no longer allow the use of error bars. Also, the Analysis Toolpak is absent and Word is incompatible with EndNote. This upgrade is worse than a waste of money.

Esther G. González

Microsoft has heard your complaints about Visual Basic. See this month's *Mac Beat,* p. 24.—Dan Miller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→Our favorite shortcuts and tricks for OS X 10.5
MacBook Air The Complete Review, p. 72
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Why buy Office 2008 when NeoOffice and OpenOffice are both free and will do many of the same tasks as Office? I'd rather buy good hardware (iMacs) and install as much free software as we need.

Via the Macworld.com Forums

OVERHEARD ON THE FORUMS

All the improvements [in OS X 10.5.2] are welcome, but the fixes for the Dock and the menu bar are especially good news. It shows that Apple does indeed pay attention—when we complain loudly enough. Now if Microsoft would just restore macro support to Office '08.

whitedog
macworld.com/3600

[One] fantastic feature of the MacBook Air that is rarely mentioned is the silence of this little gem. Every time you open a traditional Apple laptop, [the optical drive makes a mechanical noise] that sounds like a 1985 VCR preparing to spit out a videotape.

JoeBlowe
macworld.com/3601

The most important aspect of this update [10.5.2] is that it fixes the World of Warcraft graphic glitch that has existed under Leopard since [the OS] shipped. Hooray!

Tallscot
macworld.com/3602

It's a miracle that Microsoft managed to make Office 2008 this sluggish on both PowerPC and Intel Macs. Back when Apple introduced its iWork apps, I found them nice but a bit too slow for my liking. Now they look screaming fast in comparison.

Via the Macworld.com Forums

Word 2008 is not compatible with Word 2004. I have thousands of Word 2004 documents that Word 2008 cannot display. Many elements, including charts, text, and footers, will not display in print view. Microsoft said that my formatting is corrupted, but Word 2004 opens the files fine. To its credit, Microsoft offered me a full refund.

Casey Frank

If Pages offered a feature like Word's Document Map (similar to Page view, except that you can quickly see all the different sections of a document, and jump to any section by clicking on its heading), I would have switched to Pages long ago.

Via the Macworld.com Forums

Unfortunately, I had to give up using Office 2008—partly due to its slowness, but also because 2008 disables features I used in Word 2004: namely, the vertical adjustment of images relative to text. PowerPoint's instability also bothered me. I could not remember ever having PowerPoint 2004 crash during a presentation, but PowerPoint 2008 crashed twice in 50 minutes.

Via the Macworld.com Forums

I disagree with your ratings of Microsoft Office 2008. *Macworld* had an opportunity to really chastise Microsoft and didn't take it. Office 2008 is terrible: PowerPoint crashed my Mac when I was just switching between slides. I inserted

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a graphic into a Word document on my Mac, only to have it render and print upside down in Word 2003. And the omission of cross-platform scripting is unforgivable and needs to be corrected. Perhaps Microsoft's idea is that we'll run out and buy Windows and Windows Office to run on virtual machines on our Macs, and further enrich the company.

✉ **Sean Sommerfeld**

What about Tiger?

I'd love to upgrade to Leopard, I really would ("Your Leopard Survival Guide," April 2008). Unfortunately, my PowerBook G4, which is working just fine, doesn't have enough free space. I know your focus has to shift somewhat, and I'll happily save the Leopard tips cover story to read later, but why has Tiger almost completely disappeared from your coverage? I can't possibly be the only *Macworld* reader who hasn't made the switch.

✉ **Adam Grosswirth**

I'm afraid you're right: we really aren't covering 10.4 much, now that 10.5 is out. The main reason is that we spent the last two-and-a-half years covering 10.4 intensively. We may not have said everything there is to say about Tiger in that time, but we're ready to move on. And according to our reader surveys, most of you have made the upgrade. That said, you'll still find our 10.4 coverage online.—Dan Miller

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Safety First

In your article on Leopard's Firewall (*Connect*, April 2008), you praise the interface and function of Leopard's new firewall. You also correctly lament its inability to block outgoing connections. However, third-party utilities such as Objective Development's excellent Leopard-compatible LittleSnitch ($25; obdev.at) can monitor and block unauthorized connections in both directions.

✉ **Brian Hoffman**

Mac users who travel frequently should invest in an AirPort Express. Since most hotels use Ethernet as their high-speed access points in the rooms, you can just plug your Mac into the AirPort Express. It also has NAT protection, as well as WPA, WPA2, and WEP encryption, so you can make sure nobody else shares your wireless connection—or your data.

🗨 **Via the Macworld.com Forums**

Time Machine and NAS

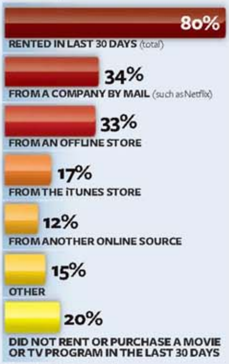
In "Better Backups with Time Machine" (March 2008), Joe Kissell says that Time Machine will not work with NAS devices apart from the Time Capsule. However, the article dedicates an entire section to configuring Time Machine to use a network volume. What is the difference between NAS devices and network volumes? As a Unix administrator, I consider them to be the same.

✉ **Jacob Kirsch**

Although a NAS device does provide a sort of network volume, that's not what I meant by that term. Time Machine works with network volumes only if they're attached to computers running Leopard and shared over AFP (AppleTalk Filing Protocol) or an 802.11n AirPort Extreme Base Station. Among the differences is the fact that a Leopard-shared volume will support the HFS+ (Journaled) file system, which Time Machine depends on, and hard links for folders (introduced in Leopard). Apple built these things into the Time Capsule, but third-party NAS devices don't include them. The use of GUID Partition Table (GPT) versus APM (Apple Partition Map) isn't relevant on a networked volume, but the use of HFS+ definitely is.—Joe Kissell

READER POLL

Which, if any, of the following places did you use to rent or purchase a movie or TV program in the last 30 days?*



Source: Karlin Associates, 2008

*Results add up to more than 100 percent due to multiple choices.

Negative Is Positive

A letter in your April 2008 issue claims that there is too much negative material in *Macworld*. That is astounding to me. If *Macworld* never said anything negative about Macs, it would be the equivalent of Apple advertising. Producing a balanced report requires both negative and positive commentary. Please keep up the good work and continue to publish balanced articles.

✉ **Bill Law**

Correction

The URL provided for Jobo in the May 2008 issue's *Mac Beat* (*Creative Notes*) was incorrect. The correct address is www.jobo.com.

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Mac Beat

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BUSINESS

Google's Mac Development

Employees' pet projects opened the door to wider efforts

Google engineer Amit Singh thought something was missing from OS X, so he took a look at what the Mac operating system didn't have that Linux and Solaris did.

"One thing stood out," says Singh, who's also the author of *Mac OS X Internals* (Addison-Wesley Professional, 2006). "There was no easy way to do file systems." So Singh decided to create one, even though he worked for Google's search team at the time and wasn't part of the company's Mac development efforts.

The reaction of his bosses to this use of company time? Go for it.

Singh's project, which became the open-source file-system utility MacFUSE, is just one of the many employee-driven efforts that go on within the walls of Google all the time. Google calls this *20 percent time,* meaning the company encourages its engineers to pursue other Google-related interests for up to 20 percent of their work hours—even if that interest has little to do with their regular duties at the search and software company. Many 20 percent projects have wound up becoming Google products: Google News and Gmail both started as 20 percent projects, as did Mac-specific efforts such as Notifier, which offers Gmail and Google Calendar notifications, and the Google Mac Developer Playground, an online collection of open-source Mac projects created at Google.

"A lot of things that happen at Google are based on empowering people to come up with ideas and pursue them if [those ideas are] good," says Sundar Pichai, Google's director of product management.

That's certainly been the case with Google's Mac offerings, which have swelled in recent months to include a wide collection of desktop and Web-based products. The company offers Mac users everything from a desktop search tool to a 3-D mapping tool to a suite of Web-based office productivity applications. In between, you'll also find a 3-D modeling program and add-ons for the Firefox Web browser.

Keeping the Mac in Mind

Google has set out to make information accessible and useful to its users.

GOOGLE SIGN PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS KAMM/GETTY IMAGES; OTHER IMAGES COURTESY OF GOOGLE

That mission reaches across borders—Google's interface can be customized into more than 100 languages, the company says—and across platforms. Still, "as a company, when you're starting out, you have to make hard tradeoffs," Pichai explains, and for Google, that meant concentrating on building products for the dominant operating system, Windows.

> **Google's '20 percent time' encourages engineers to pursue other Google-related interests during work hours.**

But developing for the Mac was always a very specific goal for Google. And the company put that plan into motion in October 2005, when it started a Mac development team for its client software. (Google declined to give the exact size of its Mac team.)

Even before that step, though, Google's Mac efforts were underway, thanks to contributions from employees who wanted to expand the company's work to a platform they loved. Later, the company could draw on the talents of employees already working on Mac projects as part of their 20 percent time.

One of the recruits was MacFUSE creator Singh, who now works as an engineering manager on the Mac team. His experience on that project—"the easiest open-source release ever," he says—has been mirrored in his experience with the Mac team, largely because of the atmosphere created at Google. Engineers are not only given the time and freedom to pursue projects, but they also have the assurance that good ideas will be embraced by the company's higher-ups.

Talking to employees, you get the impression that the real perk is the massive talent pool that Google has assembled. The inventor of the Python programming language works at Google, as do the inventors of UTF-8 character encoding and the Unix operating system.

"We have some of the brightest people in the world here," says Grunberg. "Putting them in the same room is exciting to watch."

That spirit of collaboration has been key to helping the Mac team establish itself at Google. Besides the challenge of bringing the Mac versions of products in line with their Windows counterparts, the Mac team also had to consider issues that are particular to Mac OS—or, as engineering director Marc Pawliger puts it, taking "existing products and getting the same experience while maintaining the standard Mac users expect."

Take Google Desktop, the company's desktop search application. Google programmers had to consider OS X's own built-in search technology, Spotlight, and how Google Desktop would work with it. In the end, Google positioned its desktop search app as a companion to Spotlight, giving Mac users the ability to search not only desktop files but also Gmail accounts and content from Web pages they've visited.

Or consider the case of Google's Picasa, a Windows program that finds, organizes, and shares photos. Since that mirrors much of the functionality of Apple's iPhoto, there would seem to be little incentive for Google to create a Mac version. Yet rather than ignore the platform, Google built a photo uploader that works with iPhoto—another 20 percent project—to allow Mac users to employ the Picasa Web Album feature for sharing photos online.

Not that there isn't work to be done on the Mac platform. The online Google Docs productivity apps offer only spotty support for Safari, OS X's built-in Web browser. And Google Gears, an open-source effort to let Web apps work on the desktop isn't compatible with Safari at all. But the company is committed to broad compatibility, so with any luck Safari will soon cease to be an issue.

As work continues on its Web-based applications, Google is turning an eye toward other areas where it can apply its information-management focus. Mobile platforms will certainly be a key part of Google's future, with the iPhone taking center stage.

Philip Michaels is the executive editor of Macworld.com.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Apple Reports Strong Earnings

Strong demand for Macs, driven by record laptop sales, helped Apple turn a $1.05 billion profit for its fiscal second quarter ending March 31, 2008. From January to March, the company sold 2.2 million Macs—up 51 percent from the same quarter a year ago—helping drive sales of $7.51 billion for the strongest second quarter in Apple's history. Apple also sold 1.43 million portables during the quarter, an increase of 61 percent over the same quarter in 2007, while the 856,000 desktops sold amounted to a 37 percent jump. And the company sold 10.6 million iPods and 1.7 million iPhones during the quarter, opened four additional retail stores (bringing the worldwide total to 208), and plans to open more than 40 stores in places such as Australia, China, and Switzerland in the 2008 fiscal year.

Boot Camp Bumps to 2.1

To add compatibility with Windows XP Service Pack 3 (SP3) and to fix other issues, Apple has released version 2.1 of Boot Camp, its software that lets Intel-based Macs run Windows operating systems in addition to OS X. Apple has posted three separate Boot Camp 2.1 updates—one for Windows XP, one for 32-bit Vista operating systems, and one for 64-bit Vista operating systems. Apple indicated that each update "addresses issues and improves compatibility" with the version of Windows it is intended for. With Boot Camp and a full copy of Windows XP or Vista, you can operate Windows applications the same way you could on a regular Windows-compatible computer; once you're done, you can restart to switch back to OS X. Because you're operating Windows natively through Boot Camp, it's free of the performance slowdowns and compatibility problems you face with virtualization software such as Parallels Desktop or VMware Fusion.

PRODUCTIVITY

Visual Basic's Office Comeback

Users won't see feature until next version of Office for Mac

Microsoft announced that it will be adding back support for Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) to Microsoft Office for Mac—a direct result of complaints from users about the removal of the suite's cross-platform automation functionality.

Microsoft will restore VBA in the next full upgrade to the Mac version of Office, the company said. However, Office 2008, which was sharply criticized for omitting VBA, will get only bug-fix updates (such as Service Pack 1—go to macworld.com/3616 for information); it will not be updated to add VBA support.

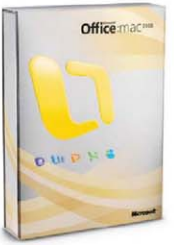
"[VBA] is important to a section of our user base who needs cross-platform compatibility," said Kurt Schmucker, Mac Business Unit group product manager and lead evangelist, in a phone briefing, "and we're bringing that back."

VBA is a programming language used with Microsoft Office applications that makes it relatively easy to add automation (macros) and customization (menus, dialog boxes, and so on) to Office documents.

VBA was part of Office 2004, but Microsoft announced in August 2006 that Office 2008 would not have VBA support. Schmucker explained that VBA on the Mac was uniquely designed for the PowerPC chip architecture and thus hard to carry over to the Intel-native Office 2008. Diverting resources to do so, he said, would have required delaying Office's 2008 release even longer, or significantly cutting back on the product's features. Microsoft has since added resources to help get VBA support ready for the next major version of Office for Mac.

Schmucker said that the next version's VBA functionality will be at least equal to that of Office 2004, and will probably include additional features from the Windows version of Office.

Though Microsoft offered no firm date when users could expect the next version of Office for Mac, the company said the product is typically revised every two to three years. Office 2008 was released on January 15, 2008.—**JONATHAN SEFF**



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APC power protection products are available at:

"The pricetag on the new UPS is $99.99. While I'm not in the habit of endorsing products in this blog, if you're in the market for a workstation-class UPS, why not opt for the greener option?"

- Heather Clancy
ZDNet.com

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iPHONE

Unlocked iPhones Are A-OK with Apple

Hacked products show strong demand

If you were Apple, what would you do upon realizing that many of the 5.4 million iPhones you've sold haven't been activated on the networks of any of your worldwide cellular partners? The correct answer? Shrug.

True, Apple doesn't get the cut from the unlocked phones that it probably receives from its cellular partners. But presumably, Apple has priced the iPhone hardware to produce a tidy profit on its own. And that's money it doesn't have to share with the likes of AT&T, O2, or T-Mobile.

This strange story, the "disappearance" of iPhones from the markets in which they're being sold, has been the highlight of the last two Apple conference calls with analysts to discuss the company's financial results. In the most recent call, Apple CFO Peter Oppenheimer said that unlocking is occurring and it's significant. "Our view is that it's a sign of clear interest and demand globally" (see "News in Brief" on page 23 for more on Apple's latest financial results).

When this unlocking trend began, I think many Apple watchers expected the company to take a pretty hard line in defending its phone-company agreements. But since the bulk of the unlocking appears to be happening in order to bring the iPhone to countries where it isn't currently available, Apple seems pretty cheery about the whole thing. (You can bet that if the company felt that unlocking was largely happening in order to let U.S. iPhones migrate from AT&T to T-Mobile, it would be making more of a pouty face.)

My guess: Apple figured some people would hack the iPhone to unlock it—but didn't expect the demand for the product to be so huge that the unlocked phones would be the massive source of sales that they have become.—**JASON SNELL**

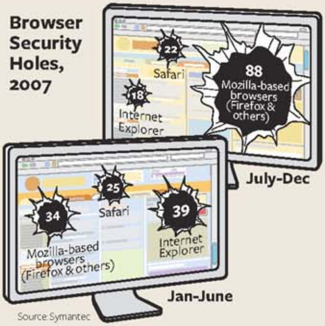
TECH TRENDS

An Epidemic of Vulnerability

More than 700,000 new computer viruses were identified in 2007, according to Symantec. Browsers are increasingly the target of infection. The number of Safari vulnerabilities identified held fairly steady from the first half to the second half of 2007, while the number of weak spots in Mozilla-based browsers (such as Firefox) more than doubled (Internet Explorer actually improved, however).

—MARYANN JONES THOMPSON

Browser Security Holes, 2007



Source: Symantec

INFOGRAPHIC BY COLIN HAYES; PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF APPLE

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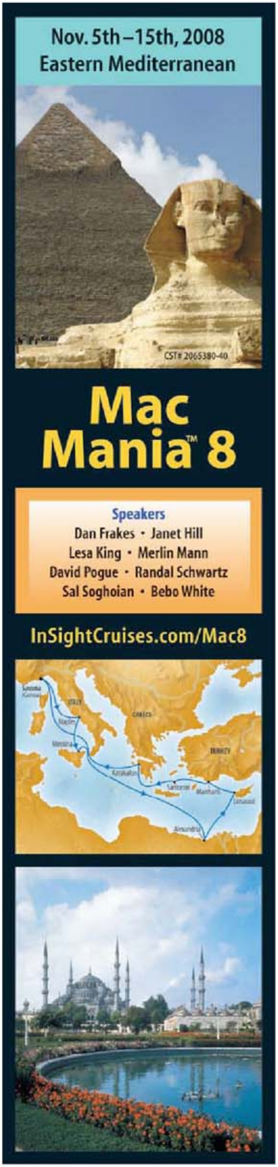
Nov. 5th–15th, 2008
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Speakers
Dan Frakes • Janet Hill
Lesa King • Merlin Mann
David Pogue • Randal Schwartz
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BUSINESS

Apple Buys Chip Designer

Purchase brings skilled engineers

Apple's recent purchase of microprocessor design firm P.A. Semi has triggered a wave of speculation over what the computer maker plans to do with its newly acquired asset.

The $278 million purchase, first reported by *Forbes*, prompted the blogosphere's almost instantaneous conclusion that Apple planned to use PA Semi's dual-core, 64-bit, low-power PWRficient processor in future mobile products.

Not so fast, folks. After taking a closer look at the deal, we've come to the conclusion that there's another, likelier explanation.

Our take, shared by numerous other industry analysts, is that Apple's relationship with Intel is strong and continuing. Instead, says Tim Bajarin, president of consulting firm Creative Strategies, adding P.A. Semi to Apple's holdings seems to be "more about buying the talent needed to help customize designs on various chips Apple will need if they are to continue to innovate."

Put another way, Apple didn't buy P.A. Semi for its PWRficient processor. Instead, it bought the 150-person company's engineering expertise and experience in developing low-power chips, in order to better work with suppliers such as Intel.

In fact, Steve Jobs later told *The Wall Street Journal's* Business Technology blog that Apple bought the company mainly for its chip designers, adding "We're very happy with Intel."

In other words, look for contributions from members of the team that created the PWRficient processor to appear in Apple's future ventures with Intel and other component suppliers. As Apple has proven with previous acquisitions, it's the engineers that count.—**RIK MYSLEWSKI**

DIALOG BOX

"We thought it was a mistake and made our engineers check the logs again."

Google's Vic Gundotra after discovering that the company had 50 times more searches from iPhones than from any other mobile handset

"Both Apple computers [we tested] ran Vista faster than our PCs did."

***Popular Mechanics'* comparison of Macs and Windows PCs**

"The fans of Apple . . . are infamous for their sensitivity to slams, real or imagined, against the beloved company."

Salon.com staff writer Farhad Manjoo in *True Enough*

MACBOOK PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF APPLE

PRODUCT WATCH

HARDWARE

DriveStation Combo 4, from Buffalo Technology (www.buffalotech.com): External hard drive with external serial ATA, FireWire 400/800, and USB 2.0 interfaces comes in 320GB, 500GB, and 1TB capacities ($149 to $349, depending on capacity).

GeForce 8800 GT, from Nvidia (www.nvidia.com): 512MB PCIe graphics upgrade kit adds compatibility with first-generation Mac Pros ($279).

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Hot Stuff

What we're raving about this month

Wooden USB Memory Sticks

The designer flash drive is usually overlooked as a status symbol, but not anymore. Whip out a one-of-a-kind wooden beauty at your next cocktail party, and prepare to bask in the envious *oohs* and *ahhs* of your friends and acquaintances. Made by quirky Netherlands design company Oooms, each USB memory stick is crafted from an actual branch, handpicked from sylvan forests. That means no two pieces look quite alike—some have knots or squiggly marks left by worms. The drives are available in 512MB, 1GB, and 2GB sizes. Starting at €60 (about $95 at press time, darn that weak dollar), the price may seem high for a flash drive—but it's a steal for a piece of art. And the sight of a twig protruding from the side of your MacBook Pro is priceless (www.oooms.nl).—**HEATHER KELLY**

Audioengine A5N Bamboo

I'm a big fan of Audioengine's $349 A5 speaker system. Few speakers for the iPod or Mac come close to the A5's performance, plus you get a USB port for charging an iPod and a built-in AC jack for connecting an AirPort Express. But the new Bamboo version, the A5N ($449), may win even more converts. Each speaker's enclosure is made of beautiful, solid bamboo from sustainable sources and is hand-finished, using a natural carbonizing process rather than stains or paint to achieve the proper look. In addition, the A5N's automatic standby mode meets Energy Star requirements. The result is the same sound quality and features of the original A5 in a more-attractive, environmentally friendly package. What's not to like (www.audioengineusa.com)?—**DAN FRAKES**

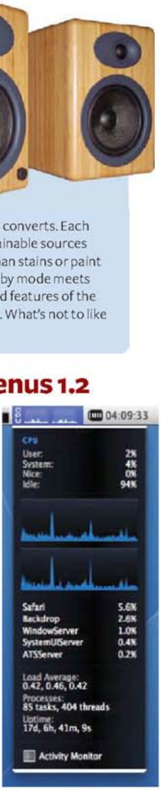
AudialHub

Finding good tools to convert, isolate, tweak, and fix audio files isn't easy. Now Techspansion—the same company that brought us VisualHub—has released AudialHub, a simple audio-manipulation tool that can handle conversions to and from most common audio formats, as well as pull audio from video clips, trim length, and more. On top of those capabilities, it has other neat features: a dynamic file queue, simultaneous conversions, and decoder and encoder options. And all this for just under $19 (techspansion.com).—**DAN POURHADI**

AKG K 701

I've tested hundreds of headphone models over the years. But the newest entry in my personal Headphone Hall of Fame list, AKG's K 701, ranks right near the top. Individually tested and numbered, each K 701 set (available online for $250 to $300) offers a slew of technical features and innovations that, together, result in one of the best-sounding sets of headphones ever. A self-adjusting, padded-leather headband and huge, cushiony ear pads provide luxurious comfort for at-home listening, and the K 701's old-school design and glossy-white finish combine for a gorgeous look that's both retro *and* modern. The downside? To do the K 701 justice, you need a dedicated headphone amplifier, such as the $149 Total BitHead. AKG's K 701 is available at www.akg.com.—**DAN FRAKES**

iStat Menus 1.2

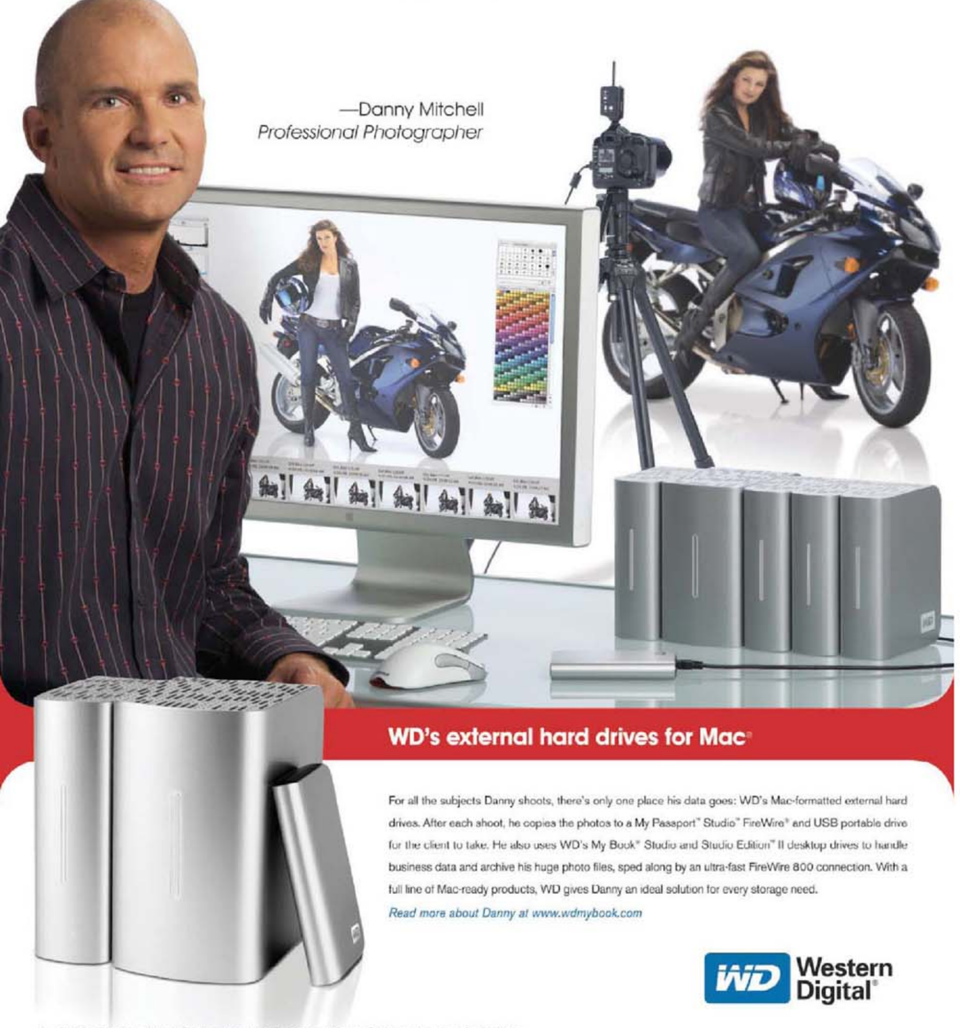


```
04:09:33
CPU
User:            2%
System:          4%
Nice:            0%
Idle:           94%
Safari          5.6%
Backdrop        2.6%
WindowServer    1.0%
SystemUIServer  0.4%
ATSServer       0.2%
Load Average:
0.42, 0.46, 0.42
Processes:
85 tasks, 404 threads
Uptime:
17d, 6h, 41m, 9s
Activity Monitor
```

I've always been a stat geek when it comes to my Mac—I like looking at my CPU temperature, network traffic, disk activity, and other readings for the sheer voyeuristic pleasure of it. And iStat Menus from iSlayer.com gives me a free and fun way to get my kicks. This program sits in your menu bar and gives you up-to-the minute information, monitoring activity on your CPUs, memory, drives, network, fans, and even Bluetooth. Plus, the Date & Time menu offers a customized drop-down calendar for keeping track of noncomputer matters. And for those customization freaks, the software is fully skinnable to boot (www.islayer.com).—**CURT POFF**

"I can't picture keeping my data on anything but a WD hard drive."

—Danny Mitchell
Professional Photographer



WD's external hard drives for Mac®

For all the subjects Danny shoots, there's only one place his data goes: WD's Mac-formatted external hard drives. After each shoot, he copies the photos to a My Passport™ Studio™ FireWire® and USB portable drive for the client to take. He also uses WD's My Book® Studio and Studio Edition™ II desktop drives to handle business data and archive his huge photo files, sped along by an ultra-fast FireWire 800 connection. With a full line of Mac-ready products, WD gives Danny an ideal solution for every storage need.

Read more about Danny at www.wdmybook.com

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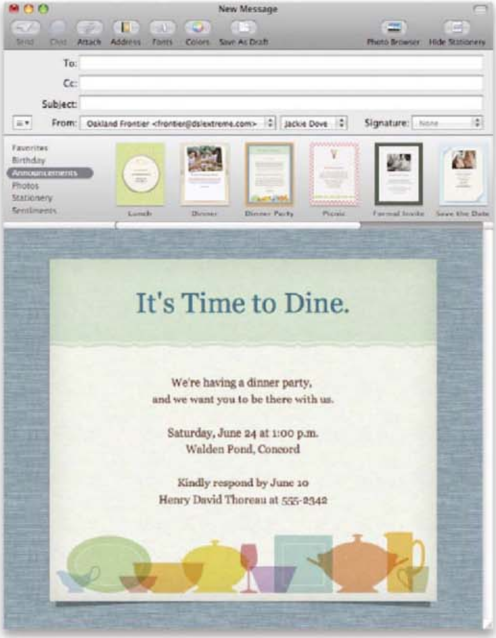
One gigabyte (GB) = one billion bytes. One terabyte (TB) = one trillion bytes. Total accessible capacity varies depending on operating environment.

Reviews



From: Oakland Frontier <frontier@dslextreme.com> Jackie Dove

Signature: None

It's Time to Dine.

We're having a dinner party,
and we want you to be there with us.

Saturday, June 24 at 1:00 p.m.
Walden Pond, Concord

Kindly respond by June 10
Henry David Thoreau at 555-2342

New Stationery Apple Mail's HTML stationery is the program's most visually striking new feature.

The E-mail Edge

Leading desktop clients and Web-based services square off

BY NATHAN ALDERMAN

If you have Internet access, you probably also have an e-mail account—and it's likely overflowing with messages. Taming the e-mail tide and screening out spam is no easy task, but the latest batch of e-mail clients for the Mac may help.

For this roundup, we evaluated Apple Mail 3.2, Microsoft Entourage 2008, Mozilla Foundation Thunderbird 2.0.0.13, GyazSquare GyazMail 1.5.7, CTM Development PowerMail 5.6.3, and Outspring Mail 1.0.4—all of which are software clients you install on your Mac. We also looked at two popular Web-based e-mail services, Google Gmail and Yahoo Mail, to see how they stack up against their desktop competitors. (Be aware that some programs have had minor upgrades since this story was written.)

Software versus Web Mail

Web mail services' interfaces and features are constantly evolving, growing ever closer to their desktop counterparts. Generally, basic service is free of charge, and storage space ranges from huge—such as Gmail's 6GB and rising—to unlimited, as Yahoo offers.

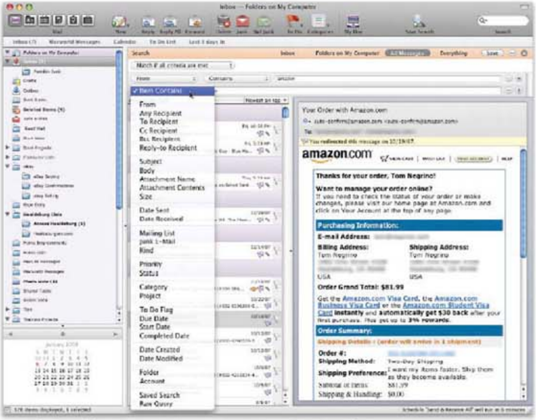
The new Yahoo Mail looks much like Entourage, with contextual menus, a preview pane for quick message viewing, and a familiar list of folders on the left side of the screen. An impressive tabbed interface lets you quickly switch between multiple open messages or mailboxes. (If you prefer simplicity, the more basic classic version of Yahoo Mail remains available.) The new Yahoo Mail lets you conduct online chats and send SMS text messages.

Gmail's spartan interface (resembling Yahoo's classic version) may lack style, but it proved faster and more responsive than Yahoo Mail in our tests, prompting fewer rendering errors in Apple's Safari and Mozilla Foundation's Firefox. Gmail's simple text-based ads are less intrusive than Yahoo's text and graphical ads, and Gmail offers free features that Yahoo Mail lacks or charges for.

Web mail may be more convenient for users who need to get their mail on-the-go. If you hate receiving advertising with your mail, or need support for multiple accounts and greater flexibility in sorting and searching mail, a desktop client may be a better option. Yahoo Mail and Gmail can send and receive mail through all the desktop clients we tested, though Yahoo charges extra for that service.

Organizing and Filtering

Beyond offering Inbox, Sent Mail, Trash, and Spam categories, nearly all the e-mail clients and online services we tested enable users to organize messages in nested folders. Cleverly, Thunderbird lets users switch between viewing all folders, only folders containing unread messages, the most recently accessed folders, or user-specified favorite folders.



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Shipping Preference: I want my items faster. Ship them as they become available.
Subtotal of Items: $81.99
Shipping & Handling: $0.00

Speedy Searching Entourage's new reliance on OS X's Spotlight for searching speeds up searches dramatically, but the program retains its wide array of search criteria. The new minimonth under the Folder List allows you to quickly jump to a date in your calendar.

Gmail spurns folders, letting users tag mail with customizable labels instead; in our tests, they worked just as well as folders for keeping mail organized. Entourage, GyazMail, PowerMail, and Thunderbird also offer custom labels.

Desktop clients have a huge edge over their Web-based rivals in that they let users create rules and filters to automatically process incoming mail. Yahoo Mail allows only the From, To/Cc, and Subject fields, or the content of the message body, as filter criteria, and it limits users to 15 filters. (Yahoo Plus service comes with unlimited filters.) Gmail lets you filter by From, To, Subject, message content, or the presence of an attachment. As you create filters, Gmail gives you a live preview, running a search on your specified criteria to show you all the messages the filter will flag. Like all the desktop e-mail software packages we tested, Gmail doesn't limit the number of filters you can create. However, nearly all of the desktop applications provide a much wider range of criteria, including the ability to sort by custom headers.

Version 1.0.4 of Outspring Mail, a brand-new competitor in the e-mail client category, does not let users create their own filters, though Outspring plans to add some in the future. Instead, the program uses a so-called software brain to learn the types of messages you file in certain folders, and then it automatically suggests filing options for messages you receive. The software takes time to train, and in the weeks we had to test it, its suggestions weren't very accurate.

Searching

Fast, accurate searching is a must for huge inboxes. All the programs and services we tested searched speedily and accurately for messages, though some had more quirks than others.

You can't use OS X's Spotlight to search GyazMail, Outspring Mail, or Thunderbird messages. Apple Mail and Entourage offer complete Spotlight support, while PowerMail's messages are available for Spotlight searches from the Finder—a convenience Outspring also intends to include in a future version of its Mail program.

For in-program searches, PowerMail uses CTM's FoxTrot technology, which proved far faster than Spotlight in our tests; it found accurate search results among 10,000 messages in less than a second, compared with five seconds for full results from less than 800 messages in Apple Mail. However, PowerMail can search the entire contents of a message only via its Find command; the search bar in PowerMail's main program window limits searches to the Subject, From, and To fields.

If you find yourself running certain searches frequently, Apple Mail, Thunderbird, and Entourage can save these searches as smart folders. Outspring plans to add this feature to its client.

Apple Mail 3.2

OUR PICK

★★★★

PROS: Nice OS X integration; encryption and parental controls; notes and to-dos; HTML stationery; data detectors recognize dates, times, and phone numbers.

CONS: Searching could be improved; rules need more flexibility; doesn't play well with Time Machine; RSS is weak.

OS X COMPATIBILITY: 10.5 (Leopard)

PROCESSOR COMPATIBILITY: Universal

PRICE: free with the $129 Mac OS X 10.5

COMPANY: Apple, www.apple.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3525

Entourage 2008

★★★★

PROS: Polished interface; nice integration within program and with OS X.

CONS: Bulky size; high price; persistent, invasive My Day window.

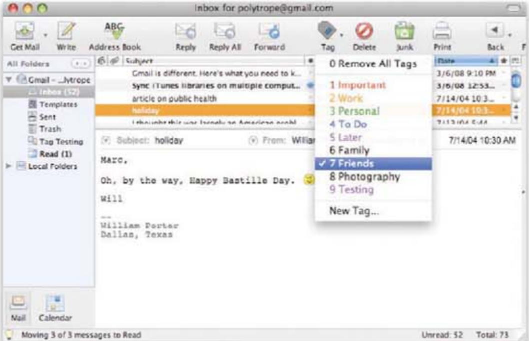
OS X COMPATIBILITY: 10.4 (Tiger), 10.5 (Leopard)

PROCESSOR COMPATIBILITY: Universal

PRICE: $400 as part of Microsoft Office 2008; suite upgrade, $240; Home and Student Edition, $150

COMPANY: Microsoft, www.microsoft.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3346



Gmail is different. Here's what you need to k... 3/6/08 9:10 PM
Sync iTunes libraries on multiple comput... 3/6/08 12:53...
article on public health 7/14/04 10:3...
holiday 7/14/04 10:3...
I thought this was largely an American probl... 7/13/04 5:44

Subject: holiday From: Willia 7/14/04 10:30 AM

```
Marc,

Oh, by the way, Happy Bastille Day.

Will

--
William Porter
Dallas, Texas
```

Easy Organization You can create as many labels as you like in Thunderbird, and apply several tags to any message. This allows you to organize and find messages in several ways.

Blocking Junk Mail

All the clients we reviewed offer some form of protection from spam, internally or via third-party add-ons.

Yahoo Mail and Gmail blocked most spam messages, but both let a handful through in our tests. Gmail seemed particularly blind to junk mail in Cyrillic or Hebrew.

Apple Mail, Outspring Mail, and Thunderbird offer proprietary junk mail filters that "learn" to identify spam; you train them by marking unwelcome messages as junk, until they start to spot combinations of words commonly found in junk messages. None are perfect, but all work fairly well, and in all but Outspring Mail, you can fill any gaps they leave by creating filters for particular offending words or headers.

Though Thunderbird flagged spam messages accurately, the program wouldn't automatically move those messages to the Trash, even though we enabled settings in both the systemwide and account-specific preferences. According to Thunderbird's online help files, this has been a known bug since 2004. Entourage can automatically flag mail it considers spam, and relies on users to fill out lists of safe and blocked senders to help its filters work better.

On its own, GyazMail offers no defense against spam. However, it's tightly and impressively integrated with C-Command's SpamSieve (●●●●●; macworld.com/2671), a third-party anti-spam utility that took top honors in *Macworld's* most recent spam-utility comparison review. SpamSieve automatically downloads and installs the first time you run GyazMail. If you don't mind paying an extra $30 per year for it, SpamSieve will flawlessly filter out unwanted messages.

PowerMail also has built-in support for SpamSieve (which works with every desktop mail client we tested) and Intego's Personal Antispam (●●●●; macworld.com/2669). SpamSieve performed equally well in PowerMail, but without it, the program's own spam filters were much less effective. Its built in options let you block all HTML messages and look for junk mail headers set by your mail server, among other things; none kept spam away in our tests.

Security and Encryption

Though relatively few viruses target the Mac, security threats still abound. And the Mac, while immune to the vast majority of PC viruses, can transmit them without being infected. Leading Mac antivirus programs such as Symantec's Norton AntiVirus (●●●●; macworld.com/1308), McAfee's Virex (replaced by VirusScan for Mac), and the free ClamXav (●●●; macworld.com/1307) can scan incoming e-mail for nasty surprises, but some of the clients we tested offered additional protection.

Gmail

●●●●

PROS: Full-featured; fast; easy to use; free POP and IMAP; AIM integration; unobtrusive text ads.

CONS: Very basic interface; spam filters miss non-Roman-alphabet messages; imperfect integration with calendars and maps; uses keywords in your mail to generate ads.

PRICE: free

COMPANY: Google, google.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3524

GyazMail 1.5.7

●●●½

PROS: Attractive; easy to use; Address Book integration; supports Growl notification software; good support; excellent composing and reading tools.

CONS: No smart folders or saved searches; no Spotlight support; limited labels; quirky distinction between real and local accounts.

OS X COMPATIBILITY: 10.2 (Jaguar), 10.3 (Panther), 10.4 (Tiger), 10.5 (Leopard)

PROCESSOR COMPATIBILITY: Universal

PRICE: $18

COMPANY: GyazSquare, www.gyazsquare.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3521

Outspring Mail 1.0.4

●●●

PROS: Unique e-mail-management approach; superb design; seamless integration with Address Book and iCal.

CONS: Buggy; currently lacks filters; pricey; no Spotlight support.

OS X COMPATIBILITY: 10.4 (Tiger), 10.5 (Leopard)

PROCESSOR COMPATIBILITY: Universal

PRICE: $95; upgrade from Outspring QuickMail, $59

COMPANY: Outspring, www.outspring.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3527

Gmail and Yahoo Mail automatically scan all e-mail attachments as they arrive, using antivirus software. Apple Mail and Entourage examine attachments for malicious code, warning you when you attempt to open potentially harmful files. Thunderbird can quarantine incoming mail for easier scanning by antivirus programs. Neither GyazMail nor PowerMail offers antivirus features.

Security concerns aren't confined to your inbox. Digital snoops can intercept and read messages sent over unsecured wireless connections—at a hotel, coffee shop, or public hotspot, for example. By encrypting messages, you can make your mail unreadable to anyone but its intended recipient.

Apple Mail and Entourage support signing and encrypting messages with digital certificates. (See "Keep Your Secrets with Mail" at macworld.com/2972.) Thunderbird offers PGP encryption via the free EnigMail extension, though it requires the free GnuPG utility, a Mac version of the open-source OpenPGP encryption tool, to work. Gmail, Yahoo Mail, GyazMail, Outspring Mail, and PowerMail don't currently support encryption. However, GyazMail's Web site indicates that such a feature is planned for a future release, and the Greasemonkey plug-in for the Firefox browser lets users add encryption to Gmail.

Unique among the programs we tested, Apple Mail offers parental controls via the Mac's System Preferences. This feature is a thoughtful idea for concerned parents or teachers.

POP versus IMAP: Which Is Better?

Anyone who has ever set up an e-mail account has probably encountered at least one of these two acronyms: POP, short for Post Office Protocol, and IMAP, or Internet Message Access Protocol. All of the desktop mail clients in this roundup can support both ways of retrieving your e-mail messages—but which is better?

POP: Tried and True

POP is the older protocol and is more widely supported among Web mail services. POP (now in version 3 and sometimes referred to as POP3) was originally designed for users on dial-up modems, who do most of their reading and composing offline.

POP works like a post office box. When new mail arrives, the server routes the messages to each user's mailbox, where it waits for retrieval. Each time a user connects, POP transfers those messages from the server to the user's computer. POP mail services commonly delete messages from the server after they've been retrieved.

IMAP: Sleek and New

IMAP is a newer protocol than POP; while every client in this roundup supports it, it's less widely used among major Web mail services.

IMAP (now in version 4 and referred to as IMAP4), in contrast to POP, remotely connects your e-mail client directly to the server. As long as you're linked to the server, you can read, respond to, or delete messages, and see new messages the instant they arrive.

Protocol Punch-Up

POP may be a better option for:

> People with desktop computers, or people with just one computer: If you have a large hard drive, and want to store your mail in a single location, POP is a fine option.

> People with intermittent Internet access: If you can't rely on an always-on broadband connection, and need to access your mail offline, a POP account will let you read your previously downloaded messages without a network connection.

> Users with limited e-mail account space: If your e-mail account still skimps on storage space, you can download mail to your hard drive to save your having to delete messages.

IMAP is better for:

> People with laptops, or people with multiple computers: When you're on the road with a laptop, and you don't want to confine yourself to a Web mail interface, IMAP will let you access all your mail in your e-mail client of choice.

> People with broadband connections: If you've got a steady online connection, IMAP can be even faster and more convenient than POP. New messages arrive instantly, sparing you from endlessly clicking on that Check Mail button.

> Users with huge e-mail accounts: If you've got tons of space on your mail server, why not leave everything there?

PowerMail 5.6.3

●●½

PROS: Fast searching via FoxTrot technology; Spotlight-accessible; can sync with OS X's Address Book.

CONS: Clunky interface; lackluster spam filtering; lacks many e-mail clients' features.

OS X COMPATIBILITY: 10.3 (Panther), 10.4 (Tiger), 10.5 (Leopard)

PROCESSOR COMPATIBILITY: Universal

PRICE: €40 (about $59)

COMPANY: CTM Development, ctmdev.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3526

Thunderbird 2.0.0.13

●●●●

PROS: Tags let you organize messages; message history and advanced folder views; saved searches; supports third-party extensions.

CONS: Not interoperable with Address Book; doesn't integrate with iCal or Spotlight.

OS X COMPATIBILITY: 10.2 (Jaguar), 10.3 (Panther), 10.4 (Tiger), 10.5 (Leopard)

PROCESSOR COMPATIBILITY: Universal

PRICE: free

COMPANY: Mozilla Foundation, www.mozilla.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3522

Yahoo Mail

●●●½

PROS: Sophisticated; Ajax-powered; drag-and-drop interface; good integration with maps, calendars, chat, and messaging; unlimited space.

CONS: Intrusive ads; limits on filters; POP account costs extra; no IMAP support; problems retrieving POP mail from other accounts.

PRICE: free; Yahoo Plus, $20 per year

COMPANY: Yahoo, www.yahoo.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3523

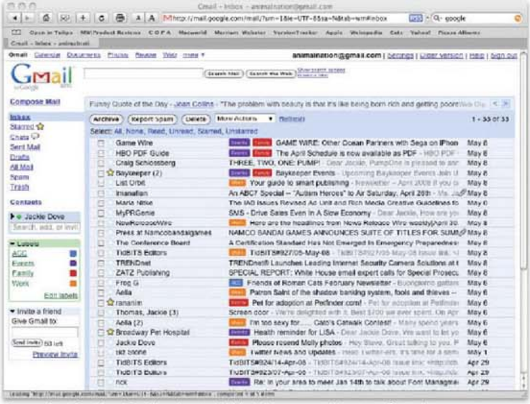
Calendars and Schedulers

Referencing e-mail messages can be crucial in planning hectic schedules, and some of the programs we tested offer additional features to help you keep on top of your calendar.

Entourage is the undisputed champion of organization, offering superbly integrated e-mail, calendar, notepad, to-do, and project-management applications. Control-clicking (or right-clicking) on any item in a mailbox lets you turn that message into a to-do item or link it to a given project. A floating My Day window reminds you of upcoming meetings and to-do items.

Thunderbird offers many Entourage-like features without the high price tag, thanks to its free Lightning add-on, available from the Thunderbird Add-Ons section of Mozilla's Web site. Lightning offers fewer bells and whistles than Entourage, but lets you easily schedule meetings and track pending tasks via a simple, appealing interface.

Apple Mail lets you create notes and to-do lists, either on their own or from highlighted text in an e-mail. However, we found the notes' default font and colors ugly. Apple Mail was far better at detecting dates and times in messages; clicking on them let us create appointments that iCal faithfully displayed.



Funny Quote of the Day - Joan Collins - "The problem with beauty is that it's like being born rich and getting poorer

Select: All, None, Read, Unread, Starred, Unstarred

Game Wire	GAME WIRE: Other Ocean Partners with Sega on iPhon	May 8
HBO PDF Guide	The April Schedule is now available as PDF - HBO PDF	May 8
Craig Schlossberg	THREE, TWO, ONE: PUMP! - Dear Jackie, PumpOne is pleased to anr	May 8
Baykeeper (2)	Baykeeper Events - Upcoming Baykeeper Events Join U	May 8
List Orbit	Your guide to smart publishing - Newsletter – April 2008 If you	May 8
Imanafan	An ABC7 Special – "Autism Heroes" to Air Saturday, April 26th	May 8
Maria Nitse	The IAB Issues Revised Ad Unit and Rich Media Creative Guidelines fo	May 8
MyPRGenie	SNS - Drive Sales Even In A Slow Economy - Dear Jackie, How are yo	May 8
NewReleaseWire	Here are the headlines from News Release Wire weekly/April 30	May 8
Press at Namcobandaigames	NAMCO BANDAI GAMES ANNOUNCES SUITE OF TITLES FOR SUMM	May 8
The Conference Board	A Certification Standard Has Not Emerged In Emergency Preparednes	May 8
TidBITS Editors	TidBITS#927/05-May-08 - TidBITS#927/05-May-08 Issue link	May 8
TRENDnet	TRENDnet® Launches Leading Internet Security Camera Solutions at t	May 8
ZATZ Publishing	SPECIAL REPORT: White House email expert calls for Special Prosecu	May 6
Frog G	Friends of Roman Cats February Newsletter - Buongiorno gattari	May 6
Aella	Patron Saint of the shadow banking system, fools and thieves –	May 6
rananim	Pet for adoption at Petfinder.com! - Pet for adoption at Petfinder	May 6
Thomas, Jackie (3)	Screen door - We're delighted with it. Best $200 we ever spent. On Apr	May 6
Aella (2)	I'm too sexy for...... Cato's Catwalk Contest! - Many spend years	May 6
Broadway Pet Hospital	Health reminder for LISA - Dear Jackie Dove, We want to let yo	May 6
Jackie Dove	Please resend Molly photos - Hey Steve, Great talking to you. P	May 6
Biz Stone	Twitter News and Updates - Hello Twitter-ers, it's time for a sem	May 1
TidBITS Editors	TidBITS#924/14-Apr-08 - TidBITS#924/14-Apr-08 Issue link	Apr 29
TidBITS Editors	TidBITS#923/07-Apr-08 - TidBITS#923/07-Apr-08 Issue link	Apr 29
nick	Re: in your area to meet Jan 14th to talk about Font Manageme	Apr 29

Convenient Sorting Gmail's color-coded labels, in concert with custom filters, let you sort your mail by sender or subject.

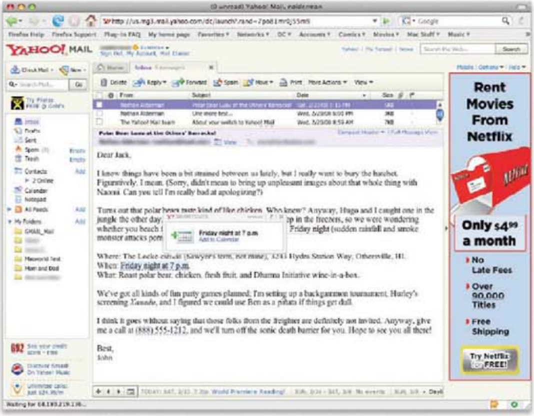
Though it doesn't offer any calendar options, Outspring Mail has data detectors linking dates to iCal. Its unique Deferment feature also lets you temporarily banish messages from your inbox for a set number of days, weeks, or months.

GyazMail and PowerMail lack scheduling features, lagging behind even Gmail and Yahoo Mail. In fact, both of the Web mail services do a respectable job of recognizing dates in messages and offering to add them to your Google or Yahoo online calendar. Gmail displays these notices just above a similar-looking set of text ads, which can be confusing. Yahoo pops up a scheduling window when you roll your mouse over a date, and it displays upcoming calendar items in a bar at the bottom of the screen.

POP and IMAP

The POP and IMAP protocols are the most common ways to retrieve mail from remote servers. (For more information, see "POP versus IMAP: Which Is Better?" on page 35.) All the desktop clients we tested offer full support for both, and Yahoo and Gmail can also retrieve mail from POP accounts. Gmail is the only major Web mail service currently offering free access to its mail from desktop clients via both POP and IMAP. Yahoo Mail charges for desktop POP access to its messages as part of its Mail Plus service, and it doesn't support IMAP.

Yahoo Mail was the only service or client we reviewed that balked at retrieving POP mail from other accounts, saying that our test server did not support the LAST command, which it needed to distinguish newly arrived messages from previously



Dear Jack,

I know things have been a bit strained between us lately, but I really want to bury the hatchet. Figuratively, I mean. (Sorry, didn't mean to bring up unpleasant images about that whole thing with Naomi. Can you tell I'm really bad at apologizing?)

Turns out that polar bears taste kind of like chicken. Who knew? Anyway, Hugo and I caught one in the jungle the other day, … up in the freezers, so we were wondering whether you beach f… Friday night (sudden rainfall and smoke monster attacks perm…

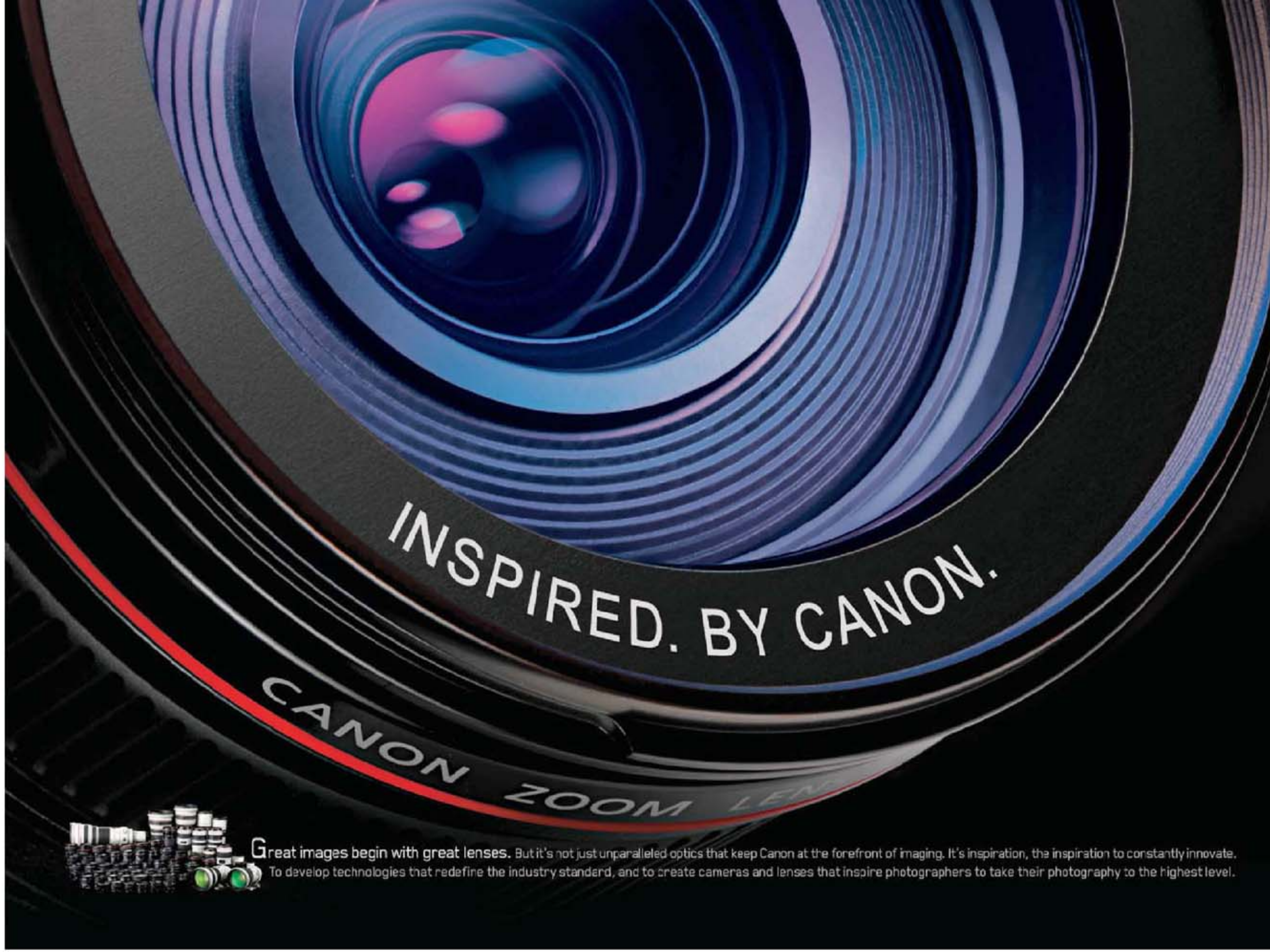
Where: The Locke cabana (Sawyer's term, not mine), 4243 Hydra Station Way, Othersville, HI
When: Friday night at 7 p.m.
What: Roast polar bear, chicken, fresh fruit, and Dharma Initiative wine-in-a-box.

We've got all kinds of fun party games planned. I'm setting up a backgammon tournament. Hurley's screening *Xanadu*, and I figured we could use Ben as a piñata if things get dull.

I think it goes without saying that those folks from the freighter are definitely not invited. Anyway, give me a call at (888) 555-1212, and we'll turn off the sonic death barrier for you. Hope to see you all there!

Best,
John

Complete Interactivity Yahoo Mail does a great job of linking dates, addresses, and phone numbers to maps, calendar appointments, and address book entries.



Great images begin with great lenses. But it's not just unparalleled optics that keep Canon at the forefront of imaging. It's inspiration, the inspiration to constantly innovate. To develop technologies that redefine the industry standard, and to create cameras and lenses that inspire photographers to take their photography to the highest level.

downloaded ones. With that feature disabled, Yahoo Mail kept retrieving copies of all the messages left on our POP server every time it checked mail. Neither Gmail nor any of the desktop clients had similar trouble.

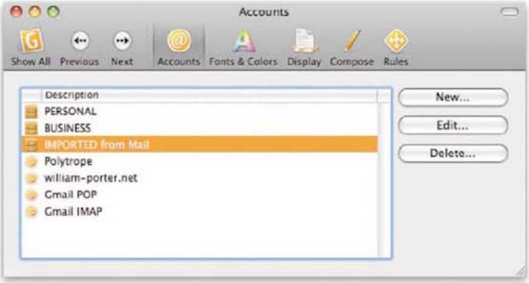
Mac OS X Integration

Apple Mail works seamlessly with iCal, along with other OS X programs such as Address Book, iChat, and even QuickTime. All the desktop clients we tested displayed attached pictures as part of a message, but only Mail played video clips from within incoming mail as well.

Microsoft has made Entourage admirably Mac-friendly. Upon first launching, Entourage flawlessly imported our messages, folder structure, rules, and accounts from Apple Mail. It can sync contacts and calendar items with Address Book and iCal, and its Mac-like interface is polished and pleasant.

GyazMail and Outspring Mail also score highly here. Both have crisp, appealing interfaces, built-in Address Book integration, and the ability to import Apple Mail mailboxes.

PowerMail features unappealing icons and an awkward user interface. For example, you can open messages or mailboxes in PowerMail only by clicking specifically on their names, rather than anywhere on the message's row in the list of messages. PowerMail can sync contacts with Address Book, though this option is buried in the program's preferences.



Description
PERSONAL
BUSINESS
IMPORTED from Mail
Polytrope
william-porter.net
Gmail POP
Gmail IMAP

Attractive but Confusing GyazMail's attractive user interface is marred by a lack of clear distinctions between real accounts, which correspond to servers outside your computer, and local pseudo-accounts, which do not.

Perhaps because of its open-source origins, Thunderbird has almost no integration with OS X. It can't import Address Book contacts without a third-party helper like Address Book Exporter (macworld.com/3547), and it won't export calendar info from Lightning to iCal.

Macworld's Buying Advice

For everyday users, Apple Mail is our top pick. It has nearly everything the average e-mail user needs, as well as other welcome features, such as parental controls, that its rivals can't match. Entourage is a very close second, and a better choice overall for business use. But its vast arsenal of workplace-centric features and $150 price make it overequipped for regular users' needs.

For power users who want more flexible options and a clean, uncluttered, and unobtrusive look-and-feel, Gmail is the better Web-based service. Still, from our perspective, no Web mail service competes with our desktop pick. ☒

Nathan Alderman is a writer, copy editor, and frequent electronic correspondent based in Alexandria, Virginia.

E-mail Programs Compared

Program	RATING	PRICE	SPAM BLOCKING	POP AND IMAP	NOTABLE FEATURES
Apple Mail 3.2 OUR PICK Apple	★★★★	free with Mac OS X 10.5	adaptive filter	receives both	encryption; parental controls; integrated with OS X's Address Book and iCal
Entourage 2008 Microsoft	★★★★	$400 as part of Microsoft Office 2008; upgrade, $240; Home and Student Edition, $150	recognizes message headers, content, and structure	receives both	included calendar, organizer, and project-management tools
Gmail Google	★★★★	free	adaptive filter	fetches POP; accessible by POP and IMAP	unlimited filters
GyazMail 1.5.7 GyazSquare	★★★½	$18	via SpamSieve	receives both	excellent SpamSieve support; Address Book integration
Outspring Mail 1.0.4 Outspring	★★★	$95; upgrade from Outspring QuickMail, $59	adaptive filter	receives both	great interface; Deferred folder
PowerMail 5.6.3 CTM Development	★★½	€40 (about $59)	HTML filter; recognizes spam headers	receives both	fast FoxTrot searching
Thunderbird 2.0.0.13 Mozilla Foundation	★★★★	free	adaptive filter	receives both	message history and advanced folder views; saves searches; built-in support for popular online mail services, including Gmail and .Mac; supports third-party extensions; highly customizable
Yahoo Mail Yahoo	★★★½	free; Yahoo Plus, $20 per year	adaptive filter	fetches POP; accessible by POP with Yahoo Plus version	sleek interface; unlimited space

WOW. INSPIRED. BY CANON.
CANON ZOOM LENS

EOS
REBEL
XSi

Wow. It's what you want people to feel when they see your photographs. It's what you want to feel when you take a shot. And it's exactly what you feel when you pick up the new **Canon EOS Rebel XSi**, featuring a 12.2-megapixel CMOS sensor, 3.0-inch LCD monitor with Live View Function and 3.5 frames-per-second continuous shooting. Now available with the EF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS lens with Optical Image Stabilizer, it's obvious the EOS Rebel XSi was designed with one thing in mind—wow.

To get more inspired about the Canon EOS system, go to: **www.usa.canon.com/dlc**

Official Camera of the NFL

Canon
imageANYWARE

©2007 Nate Shron, Winner of the 2007 Canon "Why Do You Love Football" Photo Contest, Teen Division.

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iMac Speed Boost

Apple's all-in-one Macs get the latest processor **BY ROMAN LOYOLA**

Finally, eight months after the aluminum iMac made its debut (macworld.com/3617), Apple has released an update to its flagship consumer desktop model. We found that, under the hood, the new iMacs differ significantly from the original aluminum iMac, and those differences result in speed increases.

Aluminum iMacs The standard processor configurations for the new iMacs are 2.4GHz, 2.66GHz, and 2.8GHz Intel Core 2 Duos. A 3.06GHz Core 2 Duo system is available as a build-to-order option.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF APPLE

Speed Bumps

On the outside, nothing has changed, and the iMac is still available in 20- or 24-inch aluminum-encased models. The major changes involve the Intel Core 2 Duo (Penryn) processor now at the heart of the iMac. The Penryn line's speeds start at 2.4GHz (the speed of the previous high-end standard iMac's processor), and include 2.66GHz, 2.8GHz, and 3.06GHz versions (the 3.06GHz chip is available in the iMac as a build-to-order option). The previous iMac processor speeds were 2GHz and 2.4GHz, with a 2.8GHz build-to-order option.

However, a slew of internal improvements have produced a performance spike in the standard models that makes them an especially good value for people looking to upgrade. For example, Apple boosted the system-bus speed from 800MHz in the previous iMac to 1,066MHz in the new iMac. The system bus plays a major role in communications between the processor and system memory, which can make everyday computing faster.

And speaking of memory, the standard configuration of the 2.66GHz and 2.8GHz iMacs has been raised to 2GB, installed as a pair of 1GB SO-DIMMs rated at 800MHz. The 2.4GHz iMac has only 1GB of 800MHz RAM, but Apple installs it as a single SO-DIMM so you can add more RAM without having to replace the SO-DIMM that ships with the system.

The new iMacs use the now-familiar Santa Rosa chip set—the fourth-generation Intel Centrino platform (combining the processor, chip set, and wireless interface)—found in previous iMac models. The next-generation Centrino platform, code-named Montevina, won't be released until later this year.

The hard-drive capacities of the standard configurations haven't changed. The low-end iMac still has a 250GB drive, while the other models have 320GB hard drives.

Screen and Video

Apple hasn't changed the iMac's glossy screen. While the 24-inch iMac has an 8-bit wide-screen TFT active-matrix LCD that displays millions of colors, the 20-inch iMacs use 6-bit wide-screen TFT active-matrix LCDs, achieving millions of colors via dithering. And like the previous 20-inch iMac, the new 20-inch iMacs show strong color and contrast shifts when viewed at an angle instead of straight on.

20-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/2.4GHz

●●●●

PROS: Compact, all-in-one design; built-in wireless capabilities; considerable speed boost over previous analogous model.

CONS: Viewing angle not as good as on the 24-inch model; glossy screen may frustrate some users; only 1GB of RAM.

PRICE: $1,199

COMPANY: Apple, www.apple.com

20-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/2.66GHz

●●●●

PROS: Compact, all-in-one design; built-in wireless capabilities; good video frame-rate performance; better value for the money than the low-end model.

CONS: Viewing angle not as good as on the 24-inch model; glossy screen may frustrate some users.

PRICE: $1,499

COMPANY: Apple, www.apple.com

24-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/2.8GHz

●●●●½

PROS: Compact, all-in-one design; built-in wireless capabilities; big, beautiful screen; good video frame-rate performance.

CONS: Glossy screen may frustrate some users.

PRICE: $1,799

COMPANY: Apple, www.apple.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3619

Apple still uses ATI's Radeon HD 2400 XT video card with 128MB of RAM in the low-end iMac. Both the 2.66GHz and the 2.8GHz iMacs use ATI's Radeon HD 2600 Pro with 256MB of memory. The 3.06GHz build-to-order iMac introduces a new video card to the iMac line: Nvidia's 512MB GeForce 8800 GS.

Performance

Macworld Lab ran the three new standard iMacs through our customary suite of tests to gauge performance improvements over the previous generation. The new 2.8GHz 24-inch iMac showed a 30-point (13 percent) Speedmark improvement over the previous high-end model's, a 24-inch 2.4GHz iMac. However, this new high-end iMac posted the same Speedmark score as the previous build-to-order model, a 2.8GHz 24-inch model. The new low-end iMac, a 2.4GHz 20-inch model, had a Speedmark score that was 26 points higher (13 percent faster) than that of the previous low-end model, a 2GHz 20-inch iMac. Also, the new 2.4GHz 20-inch iMac scored 9 points lower than the older midrange iMac, a 2.4GHz 20-inch model. But as we pointed out in our earlier Macworld Lab benchmark report (macworld.com/3618) on the new iMacs, the older 2.4GHz 20-inch iMac that we tested had a larger hard drive and a better graphics card than the new entry-level model, which explains the speed difference.

There's a considerable performance gap between the new $1,499, 2.66GHz 20-inch iMac and the new $1,199, 2.4GHz 20-inch model. The 2.66GHz model's Speedmark score was 24 points higher than that of the 2.4GHz model, a 10 percent difference. If you spend the extra money for the 2.66GHz model, you get not only a speed boost, but also more RAM (2GB versus 1GB), a bigger hard drive (320GB versus 250GB), and a better video card (a 256MB Radeon HD 2600 Pro versus a 128MB Radeon HD 2400 XT). The extra $300 is worth it.

Longtime Mac users remember the days when 3GHz in a desktop Mac seemed like an unattainable goal, but that was the era of the PowerPC and single-core processors.

Longtime Mac users remember the days when 3GHz in a desktop Mac seemed like an unattainable goal—but that was the era of the PowerPC and single-core processors. The 3GHz desktop Mac arrived in the form of the Mac Pro, and now, a 3GHz system—or 3.06GHz, to be exact—is available in the iMac lineup as a build-to-order option. The 3.06GHz iMac's Speedmark score was only 11 points higher than both the old 2.8GHz build-to-order iMac's and the new 2.8GHz model's, a meager gain of 4 percent. However, what really separates the 3.06GHz build-to-order iMac from the new 2.8GHz iMac is its graphics performance. The 3.06GHz iMac, with its 512MB GeForce 8800 GS graphics card, blasted by the 2.8GHz iMac, with its 256MB Radeon HD 2600 Pro, by 18.8 frames per second (a 28 percent improvement) in our Quake 4 test.

Macworld's Buying Advice

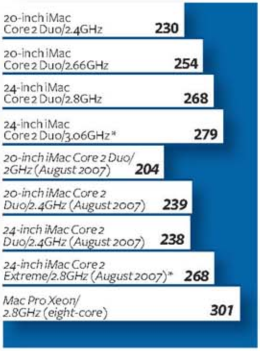
The new iMacs are faster than the previous models, but they cost the same. Unfortunately, the one major thing we didn't like about the first-generation aluminum iMac—the poor viewing angle on the 20-inch screen—has not changed for the better. Still, our praise of the previous aluminum iMac still applies: The iMac offers enough features for both general consumers and professionals.

The 2.66GHz 20-inch iMac offers a nice blend of price and performance; it's a better value than the 2.4GHz iMac. The 2.8GHz iMac, in all its 24-inch glory, is a stunning machine and is bound to make an impression in your home or office. ☒

Roman Loyola is a *Macworld* senior editor.

Macworld Lab Test

Speedmark 5 Test Results



Longer is better. Reference systems are in *italics*. Speedmark 5 scores are relative to those of a 1.5GHz Core Solo Mac mini, which is assigned a score of 100. All systems were running Mac OS X 10.5.2 with 2GB of RAM. *Build-to-order configurations.—MACWORLD LAB TESTING BY BRIAN CHEN, JAMES GALBRAITH, AND JERRY JUNG

macworld.com/reviews

What we're reviewing online this month

SOFTWARE

Command & Conquer 3: Tiberium Wars △

RATING: 🐭🐭🐭🐭 **PRICE:** $50 **COMPANY:** Electronic Arts **URL:** www.ea.com

Few games have helped define the real-time strategy genre more than the Command & Conquer series. The newest chapter introduces an alien race faction called the Scrin, who employ different technologies, production methods, and resource-management techniques than longtime C&C players are accustomed to with the Global Defense Initiative and Brotherhood of Nod factions. Command & Conquer 3 is an awesome addition to Electronic Arts' franchise and a solid Mac offering. It's just a shame that PowerPC-based Mac users can't play it, too (macworld.com/3579).

Montage 1.4

RATING: 🐭🐭🐭½ **PRICE:** $150 **COMPANY:** Mariner Software **URL:** www.marinersoftware.com

Even a rudimentary word processor can meet most of a screenwriter's formatting needs, so specialized screenwriting programs must deliver more. Montage 1.4 takes a refreshingly different approach, with features like integrated research tools and scene filtering by keyword or scene status. Montage's Smart View feature isn't new, but it's the creative tool you never realized you needed—it allows you to tag all your scenes with metadata and then display only scenes that meet your criteria. Montage 1.4 could be just what the director ordered, but if you need a professional tool for tackling production rewrites, you'll be better off waiting for the sequel (macworld.com/3585).

FIND IT ONLINE For expanded reviews, type the blue URL at the end of each summary into your browser's address bar.

Movie Magic Screenwriter 6.0

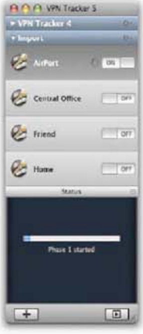
RATING: 🐭🐭🐭🐭½ **PRICE:** $250 **COMPANY:** Write Brothers **URL:** www.write-bros.com

When it comes to screenwriting software, Movie Magic Screenwriter 6.0.3.111 makes a strong play for the top box-office spot. One of the most stable and full-featured professional screenwriting software tools available, Movie Magic adds significant navigation and outlining capabilities—though you may find the latter intimidating the first time you use them. Rewriting tools such as revision marks, A-B pages, and colored pages are all handled painlessly within Movie Magic. This is just the beginning; pros will welcome Movie Magic's vast array of features, but Writers Guild wannabes may want to think twice before they pay for capabilities they'll never use (macworld.com/3614).

VPN Tracker 5.2 Professional

RATING: 🐭🐭🐭½ **PRICE:** $250 **COMPANY:** Equinux **URL:** www.equinux.com

A Virtual Private Network (VPN) is a way to connect your Mac securely to a remote network over the Internet. A VPN client such as VPN Tracker connects to a VPN server or gateway, creating an encrypted tunnel. VPN Tracker makes an admirable effort to hide the complexity of VPNs and guide you through connection creation and troubleshooting. It also supports hundreds of VPN gateways, simultaneous connections, and startup and shutdown actions. What may make you balk is the price—many VPN gateways include free client software. Unless you need a client for a gateway that doesn't support Macs, or are looking to enable multiple connections for users in a single client, free options such as the native Mac OS X IPSec client or the software provided with your VPN gateway are more cost effective (macworld.com/3607).



HARDWARE

324 LCD Monitor △

RATING: 🐭🐭🐭🐭½ **PRICE:** $1,060 **COMPANY:** LaCie **URL:** www.lacie.com

The 24-inch 324 LCD Monitor targets creative pros, but with two HDMI inputs, the monitor is both a multimedia display and an art director's tool. After calibration, the display looked great, with accurate colors, good shadow detail, rich blacks, and neutral grays. The on-screen menu offers several tools for display adjustment and preset options, but with its large black window and white text, it's not your typical LCD settings menu. An Apple TV connected to the 324's HDMI ports without any problems. The 324 has the right tools for both work and pleasure (macworld.com/3584).

SLUGGISH SYSTEMS COULD USE
A BOOST!
STAYS COOL
60 FAST FLAVORS MAC USERS LOVE
TECHWORKS by BUFFALO
INCREASES SPEED & BOOSTS MEMORY SO YOU CAN WORK FASTER!
2GB RAM 240-PIN FB-DIMM

Trouble getting up to speed?

Here's some refreshing news. Buffalo offers over **60 SKUs of RAM built and tested for Apple Computers.** Revitalize and energize your workflow. Upgrade your memory with TechWorks today!

TECHWORKS® by BUFFALO.

The Original Apple Performance Upgrade Since 1986

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buffalotech.com/techworks

MICRO CENTER NCIX.COM OWC TigerDirect.com

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DroboShare

RATING: ●●●●
PRICE: $199
COMPANY: Data Robotics **URL:** www.drobo.com

DroboShare, a companion to the Drobo USB storage system, makes Drobo available on a network. DroboShare keeps things simple by eschewing the more complex—though more secure—granular access controls found in traditional NAS (Networked Attached Storage) products. Other traditional NAS products have more bells and whistles, but Drobo and DroboShare get our nod for no-fuss, expandable, and protected storage (macworld.com/3580).

eGo (250GB)

RATING: ●●●● **PRICE:** $152 **COMPANY:** Iomega **URL:** www.iomega.com

This bus-powered portable hard drive makes toting your digital files easy. In our testing on a Mac Pro, the eGo's USB performance slightly outpaced its FireWire 400 speed; on a PowerPC-based Mac, FireWire blazed past USB by a wide margin. While the eGo is no speed demon, its sturdy construction, small size, and smart looks suit it perfectly to mobile Mac users (macworld.com/3583).

GHDMIAS4 4 Port Automatic HDMI Switch △

RATING: ●●●●◐ **PRICE:** $190 **COMPANY:** Iogear **URL:** www.iogear.com

HDTVs usually have one or two HDMI ports for high-resolution digital video and audio signals. With an HDMI switch like the GHDMIAS4, you can connect up to four HDMI devices. The quality of the video and audio that passed through the switch was as good as what you'd get from a direct connection between the source device and a TV. If you're looking toward the future and desire an HDMI 1.3v–compliant switcher, this Iogear box is a good choice (macworld.com/3582).

Zeppelin

RATING: ●●●●◐ **PRICE:** $600 **COMPANY:** Bowers & Wilkins **URL:** www.bowers-wilkins.com

Three things make the Zeppelin stand out from the crowded iPod speaker market. The first: its appearance. B&W applied many of the design principles behind its home speakers to the Zeppelin. The second is its technical features, which include a built-in digital-to-analog converter and intuitive interface controls. The last thing is sound quality—the Zeppelin sounds more like a small home stereo than like an iPod speaker. If sound quality is your primary consideration, some less-expensive products compete well with the Zeppelin but don't offer the same quality and attention to detail. The Zeppelin is reminiscent of Apple's own hardware, which often stands out for a compelling combination of design, performance, and overall quality (macworld.com/3577).

Neo-Flex Combo Lift Stand △

RATING: ●●●● **PRICE:** $179 **COMPANY:** Ergotron **URL:** www.ergotron.com

The Neo-Flex Combo Lift Stand is an interesting combination of a monitor stand and a laptop stand, with a VESA-standard display mount on the left side and an adjustable tray for a laptop on the right. The tiltable laptop tray raises the laptop's screen so that it's in line with the LCD on the other side. Our biggest complaint about the Neo-Flex Combo Lift is that it doesn't allow you to independently adjust the height of the display and the laptop. Overall, the Neo-Flex Combo Lift is a clever way to make use of the MacBook's display while the laptop is docked to a second monitor (macworld.com/3589).

SpaceNavigator for Notebooks

RATING: ●●●● **PRICE:** $129 **COMPANY:** 3Dconnexion **URL:** www.3dconnexion.com

The SpaceNavigator for Notebooks is a 3-D mouse that lets you move horizontally, vertically, and in a third dimension of depth within 3-D programs such as Autodesk Maya, Google Earth, and Second Life. The major drawback is its limited software compatibility (it works with only 16 Mac programs), but the device will restore some of the sanity you've lost while trying to fit a 2-D input device into a 3-D workspace (macworld.com/3588).

TuneStudio △

RATING: ●●●◐ **PRICE:** $250 **COMPANY:** Belkin **URL:** www.belkin.com

The TuneStudio is a four-track audio mixing console that can record to and play back from a fifth-generation iPod, a second- or third-generation iPod nano, or an iPod classic, as well as connect to your Mac via USB. The TuneStudio produces clean audio, offers plenty of gain, and allows you to plug in a few instruments and record hours of CD-quality audio with the touch of a button. It has its limitations, however: it doesn't offer any way to insert effects, and it lacks support for MIDI and multichannel recording on a Mac. The TuneStudio works as advertised, though some users may wish it were a bit more flexible (macworld.com/3578).

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Top Products

Your guide to the best hardware we've tested. See more at macworld.com/reviews.

PRINTERS

LASER PRINTER

C6100dn

RATING: ●●●●½
PRICE: $679
COMPANY: Oki Data
URL: www.okidata.com

The C6100dn, from Oki Data, produces great-looking prints and includes built-in duplexing. It also offers easy network connectivity and quick printing speeds (macworld.com/1670).

INK-JET PHOTO PRINTER

Stylus Photo 1400

RATING: ●●●●
PRICE: $260
COMPANY: Epson
URL: www.epson.com

Epson's Stylus Photo 1400 prints photos that are rich in both color and detail. Capable of outputting images as large as 13 by 19 inches, this printer is surprisingly well priced, without compromising on quality (macworld.com/2924).

COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER

PictureMate Zoom PM 290

RATING: ●●●●½ **PRICE:** $200
COMPANY: Epson
URL: www.epson.com

Affordable, problem-free, and enjoyable to use, the PictureMate Zoom is the speediest and best overall portable photo printer on the market (macworld.com/3102).

MULTIFUNCTION INK-JET

Stylus Photo RX680

RATING: ●●●●½ **PRICE:** $130
COMPANY: Epson
URL: www.epson.com

With terrific print quality and features such as two paper trays, a duplexer, and standalone photo restoration, the Epson Stylus Photo RX680 is truly an excellent multifunction printer (macworld.com/3458).

MACS

PRODUCT	PROCESSOR	RATING	PRICE[A]	DISPLAY	SPEEDMARK 5 SCORE[B]	FIND CODE[C]
DESKTOP						
iMac	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.4GHz	●●●●	$1,094	20 inches	230	3597
	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.66GHz	●●●●	$1,467	20 inches	254	3598
	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.8GHz	●●●●½	$1,750	24 inches	268	3599
Mac mini	Intel Core 2 Duo/1.83GHz	●●●●	$589	not included	159	3030
	Intel Core 2 Duo/2GHz	●●●●	$775	not included	172	3031
Mac Pro	Intel Xeon/ two quad-core 2.8GHz	●●●●½	$2,597	not included	314	3363
PORTABLE						
MacBook	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.1GHz	●●●●	$999	13 inches	180	3464
	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.4GHz	●●●●½	$1,260	13 inches	193	3465
	Intel Core 2 Duo/ 2.4GHz (black)	●●●●½	$1,460	13 inches	196	3466
MacBook Air	Intel Core 2 Duo/1.6GHz	●●●½	$1,669	13 inches	124	3364
MacBook Pro	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.4GHz	●●●●½	$1,860	15 inches	204	3467
	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.5GHz	●●●●½	$2,350	15 inches	222	3468
	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.5GHz	●●●●½	$2,450	17 inches	219	3469

[A] From a PriceGrabber survey of retailers as of May 7, 2008. [B] Speedmark 5 is Macworld Lab's standard test tool for benchmarking systems running Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard). For information on Speedmark testing, go to www.macworld.com/speedmark. [C] Typing in find codes after *macworld.com/* directs you to a product's review or overview. For example, macworld.com/3364 contains an overview of the 1.6GHz MacBook Air.

MULTIFUNCTION LASER

MFC-9840CDW

RATING: ●●●●
PRICE: $627
COMPANY: Brother
URL: www.brother-usa.com

NEW In addition to being a great all-in-one color laser printer, scanner, copier, and fax machine, the MFC-9840CDW includes bonus features, such as a duplexer and wireless connectivity, that make it an outstanding value (macworld.com/3566).

FLATBED SCANNER

Perfection V700 Photo

RATING: ●●●●
PRICE: $474
COMPANY: Epson
URL: www.epson.com

The Epson Perfection V700 Photo is an excellent and extremely speedy midrange scanner that's equipped with two lenses for people who need to scan both reflective media and transparencies, especially at high resolutions (macworld.com/1519).

Top Products are those we've recently reviewed in a comparison of like products. As new products become available, we'll update this list. For longer reviews of these products and for other product recommendations, go to macworld.com/reviews. All prices are the best current prices taken from a PriceGrabber survey of retailers as of May 7, 2008.

DIGITAL CAMERAS

DIGITAL SLR

D40

RATING: ●●●●
PRICE: $449
COMPANY: Nikon
URL: www.nikonusa.com

The Nikon D40 is a great value. This 6.1-megapixel camera comes with every feature you'd desire in a DSLR, such as adjustable ISO, Raw mode, and a variety of image-processing features (macworld.com/2498).

COMPACT DIGITAL CAMERA

NV11

RATING: ●●●●½
PRICE: $245
COMPANY: Samsung
URL: www.samsung.com

An excellent point-and-shoot digital camera, the 10.1-megapixel Samsung NV11 accommodates both beginners and advanced shutterbugs (macworld.com/2984).

MINIDV CAMCORDER

PV-GS320

RATING: ●●●●
PRICE: $318
COMPANY: Panasonic **URL:** www.panasonic.com

Compared with other 3-CCD MiniDV camcorders, the Panasonic PV-GS320 is a bargain. And it's a good choice for people who want a camcorder that shoots high-quality video and still images for half the cost of a high definition device (macworld.com/2701).

LCD MONITORS

LARGE DISPLAY

LP2465

RATING: ●●●●
PRICE: $615 **COMPANY:** Hewlett-Packard
URL: www.hp.com

The HP LP2465 is an extremely adjustable 24-inch desktop LCD panel with a 16:10 wide-screen aspect ratio that immediately calls to mind the cinema. This affordable display's screen features a quick, 6ms gray-to-gray pixel response time, which makes it an excellent choice for viewing motion-heavy graphics (macworld.com/2508).

MEDIUM DISPLAY

MultiSync 2190UXi

RATING: ●●●●½ **PRICE:** $999 **COMPANY:** NEC
URL: www.necdisplay.com

The NEC MultiSync 2190UXi monitor is designed—and priced—for professional users. This 21-inch display doesn't come cheap, but it offers vivid, accurate colors; a wide viewing angle; and a convenient height-adjustable stand (macworld.com/1445).

FIREWIRE HARD DRIVES

DESKTOP DRIVE

My Book Studio Edition

RATING: ●●●●½ **PRICE:** $239
COMPANY: Western Digital
URL: www.westerndigital.com

The My Book Studio Edition's affordability, versatile connection options, compact design, and good performance add up to a superb 1TB drive (macworld.com/3295).

PORTABLE DRIVE

Rocbit 2B

RATING: ●●●●●
PRICE: $181
COMPANY: Rocsecure **URL:** www.rocsecure.com

The portable Rocbit 2B is priced a bit higher than similar portable drives that lack encryption, but it's well worth its cost if security is a concern. In our tests, the Rocbit 2B was 6 to 31 percent faster than three comparable drives from other vendors (macworld.com/1443).

iPODS

PRODUCT	CAPACITY	RATING	PRICE[1]	DISPLAY	BATTERY LIFE	MEDIA SUPPORTED	FIND CODE[2]
iPod classic	80GB	●●●●	$230	2.5-inch color	30 hours of music playback; 5 hours of video playback	Music, photos, album art, video, games	3090
	160GB	●●●●	$319	2.5-inch color	40 hours of music playback; 7 hours of video playback	Music, photos, album art, video, games	3091
iPod touch	8GB	●●●½	$259	3.5-inch color	22 hours of music playback; 5 hours of video playback	Music, photos, album art, video	3092
	16GB	●●●½	$325	3.5-inch color	22 hours of music playback; 5 hours of video playback	Music, photos, album art, video	3093
	32GB	●●●●	$473	3.5-inch color	22 hours of music playback; 5 hours of video playback	Music, photos, album art, video	3365
iPod nano	4GB	●●●●½	$133	2-inch color	24 hours of music playback; 5 hours of video playback	Music, photos, album art, video, games	3094
iPod nano	8GB	●●●●½	$189	2-inch color	24 hours of music playback; 5 hours of video playback	Music, photos, album art, video, games	3095
iPod shuffle	1GB	●●●●	$49	none	12 hours of music playback	Music	2238
	2GB	●●●●	$69	none	12 hours of music playback	Music	3470

[1] From a PriceGrabber survey of retailers as of May 7, 2008. [2] Typing in find codes after *macworld.com/* directs you to a product's review or overview. For example, macworld.com/3092 contains an overview of the 8GB iPod touch.

Mac Gems

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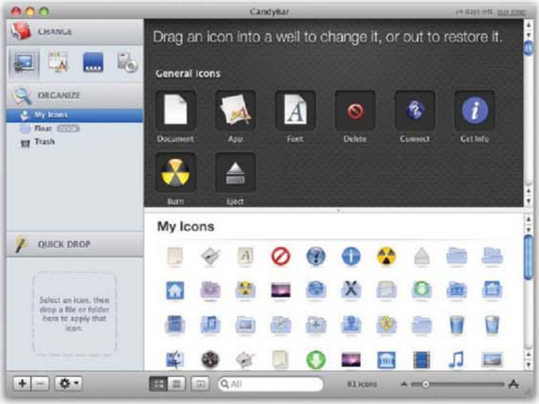
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Float
Trash
QUICK DROP
Select an icon, then drop a file or folder here to apply that icon.
Drag an icon into a well to change it, or out to restore it.
General Icons
Document
App
Font
Delete
Connect
Get Info
Burn
Eject
My Icons
All
83 icons

Icon Changer CandyBar lets you easily change system-level icons, the icons of personal files, and the Dock's appearance.

UTILITY

CandyBar 3.1.2

RATING: ★★★★ **PRICE:** $29 **COMPANY:** IconFactory and Panic **URL:** www.iconfactory.com and www.panic.com

For as long as the Mac operating system has let you change file and folder icons, Mac users have been customizing them. Whether used to improve a hard drive's appearance, to make a folder stand out, or simply to add a bit of personality to your desktop, custom icons are popular.

In Mac OS X, a set of system-level images provides all standard icons—for example, the icons for a generic folder, the Trash, or your Home folder. Changing these icons requires editing system files (which changes the icons for every user on the Mac), a process that's more trouble than it's worth. That's where CandyBar 3.1.2, a joint effort between Panic and IconFactory, comes in. It lets you easily and safely edit these icons and customize Leopard's Dock.

CandyBar's icon tools are separated into four categories: system icons, application program icons (for any program in /Applications), Dock icons, and mounted volume icons. Once you select a category, the upper right corner of the CandyBar window shows that category's current icons.

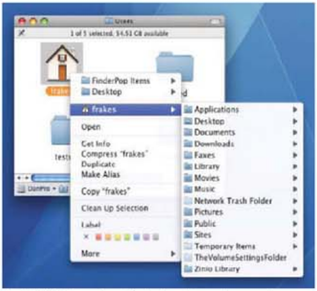
Possible replacements for the standard icons appear in the window's lower right corner. To make a change, drag an icon or a Dock element from this area onto the item you want it to replace (for example, the Trash icon). CandyBar doesn't apply your changes until you click on either the Apply Icons or the Apply Dock button.

CandyBar 3 incorporates the Pixadex icon-organization software, which gives the program iPhoto-like capabilities for storing and organizing icons. You can resize icons while browsing, store and view icon information, and even use Quick Look to get an up-close view of an icon at all its supported sizes. To acquire more icons, you import a supported icon or image file, or import special iContainer or IconDropper icon-collection files into CandyBar. The IconFactory Web site also provides a slew of collections.

You can create collections of icons and Dock arrangements in iPhoto-like albums. And CandyBar supports smart collections—which are essentially saved searches, similar to iPhoto's smart albums.

CandyBar keeps a backup of all icons and Dock elements you've changed, which is useful if you want to revert to the stock icons. To revert, just select the appropriate category in the Change tab and click on the Restore Icons or Restore Dock button in the Change pane.

CandyBar 3's interface is initially a bit more complex than you might expect, perhaps because it combines two programs into one. After you make it through the initial learning period, though, it's both easy and fun to use.


Users
1 of 5 selected, 54.51 GB available
frakes
FinderPop Items
Desktop
frakes
Open
Get Info
Compress "frakes"
Duplicate
Make Alias
Copy "frakes"
Clean Up Selection
Label:
More
Applications
Desktop
Documents
Downloads
Faxes
Library
Movies
Music
Network Trash Folder
Pictures
Public
Sites
Temporary Items
TheVolumeSettingsFolder
Zinio Library

Quick File Browsing FinderPop lets you browse the contents of a folder or volume by control- or right-clicking on it.

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UTILITY

FinderPop 2.1.2

RATING: 🖱🖱🖱🖱½ **PRICE:** donations requested
COMPANY: Turlough O'Connor
URL: www.finderpop.com

FinderPop lets you browse the contents of any folder or volume via contextual menus. Control-click (or right-click) on a folder or volume, and the resulting contextual menu displays a hierarchical list of its contents; choose an item to open it. (You can browse the contents of an already-open folder by right-clicking on any open area of the window.) You can also choose to include, in all contextual menus, submenus for the desktop and the FinderPop Items folder, so you have instant access to files in those locations.

FinderPop also provides a menu of your favorite files and folders whenever you click on a blank area of the menu bar. The contents of this menu reflect the contents of the special FinderPop Items folder; anything you put inside—files, aliases, folders—is accessible via FinderPop's menus. You can also browse the contents of any mounted volume or of the desktop by shift-clicking on any empty menu-bar area.

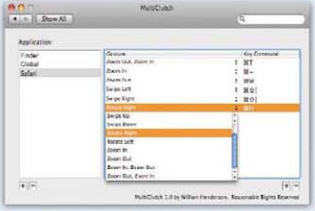
You can also perform actions on items in FinderPop menus. By pressing the

Make Multitouch Multifaceted

Apple's latest laptops feature a multitouch trackpad that lets you use multiple-finger gestures to perform actions such as flipping through images in iPhoto. Unfortunately, this feature is currently limited to a handful of programs. Will Henderson's MultiClutch (donations accepted; macworld.com/3520), currently at beta version 5, extends it to other programs via a new system preference pane.

Assignable gestures include a three-finger swipe (left, right, up, or down), rotate (right or left), and zoom (in or out). There are also two combination gestures: zoom out and then in, and zoom in and then out; you perform these in one fluid motion.

MultiClutch is still in beta, so it has a few quirks and its feature set isn't complete. But I've been enjoying it on my laptop with no ill effects.


MultiClutch
Show All
Application
Finder
Global
Safari
Gesture
Key Command
Zoom Out, Zoom In
Zoom In
Swipe Left
Swipe Right
Swipe Up
Swipe Down
Rotate Left
Zoom In
Zoom Out
Zoom In, Zoom Out
Zoom Out, Zoom In
MultiClutch 1.0 by William Henderson. Reasonable Rights Reserved

Dynamic Multitouch Trackpad MultiClutch lets you assign actions to multitouch gestures on Apple's newest laptops.

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appropriate modifier keys, you can view detailed data about the item under the cursor, move it to the Trash, see a small preview, view a Quick Look preview, or grab the item to drag and drop it as if you had grabbed it in the Finder.

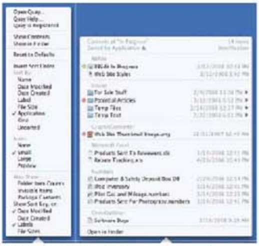
If you want quicker access to your files and folders, FinderPop offers a mouse-driven alternative to keyboard launchers like LaunchBar, Quicksilver, and Butler.

UTILITY

Quay 1.1b3

RATING: ♦♦♦♦ **PRICE:** €7, or about $10
COMPANY: Rainer Brockerhoff
URL: www.brockerhoff.net

Speaking of browsing menus, early versions of Leopard were missing hierarchical Dock menus, a popular feature of previous Mac OS versions that lets you place a folder in the Dock and navigate that folder's contents from there. Back then, Quay brought that feature to Leopard, so it might seem that with the release of Mac OS X 10.5.2, which finally brings a similar feature to Leopard, Quay is no longer needed. But Quay continues to offer compelling features.



Better Dock Menus Quay enhances Leopard's Dock menus to provide much more list-view functionality.

Quay's hierarchical Dock menus let you navigate the contents of aliased folders, which isn't possible in the Dock's default hierarchical (List) view. Quay expands the Dock's default sorting options, letting you sort Dock menus by label, file size, or application (for example, all Excel files grouped together); you can also invert the sort order. You can choose the size of icons in the menu, display a small preview of each item instead, or omit icons altogether. You can also choose to see invisible items in Dock menus, as well as navigate the contents of packages. A useful option shows the number of items in each folder; alternatively, Quay can display the modification or creation date, label, or file size next to each item.

Quay's menus are slightly slower to appear than Leopard's stock Dock menus; the program doesn't offer any way to set default views (in case you want all your Quay menus to use the same options); and I ran into a few minor glitches here and there. But it's become a must-have utility on all my Macs. ☒

Senior Editor **Dan Frakes** is always looking for great, low-cost products. Send your thoughts on this column, or on things you'd like to see in future columns, to macgems@macworld.com.

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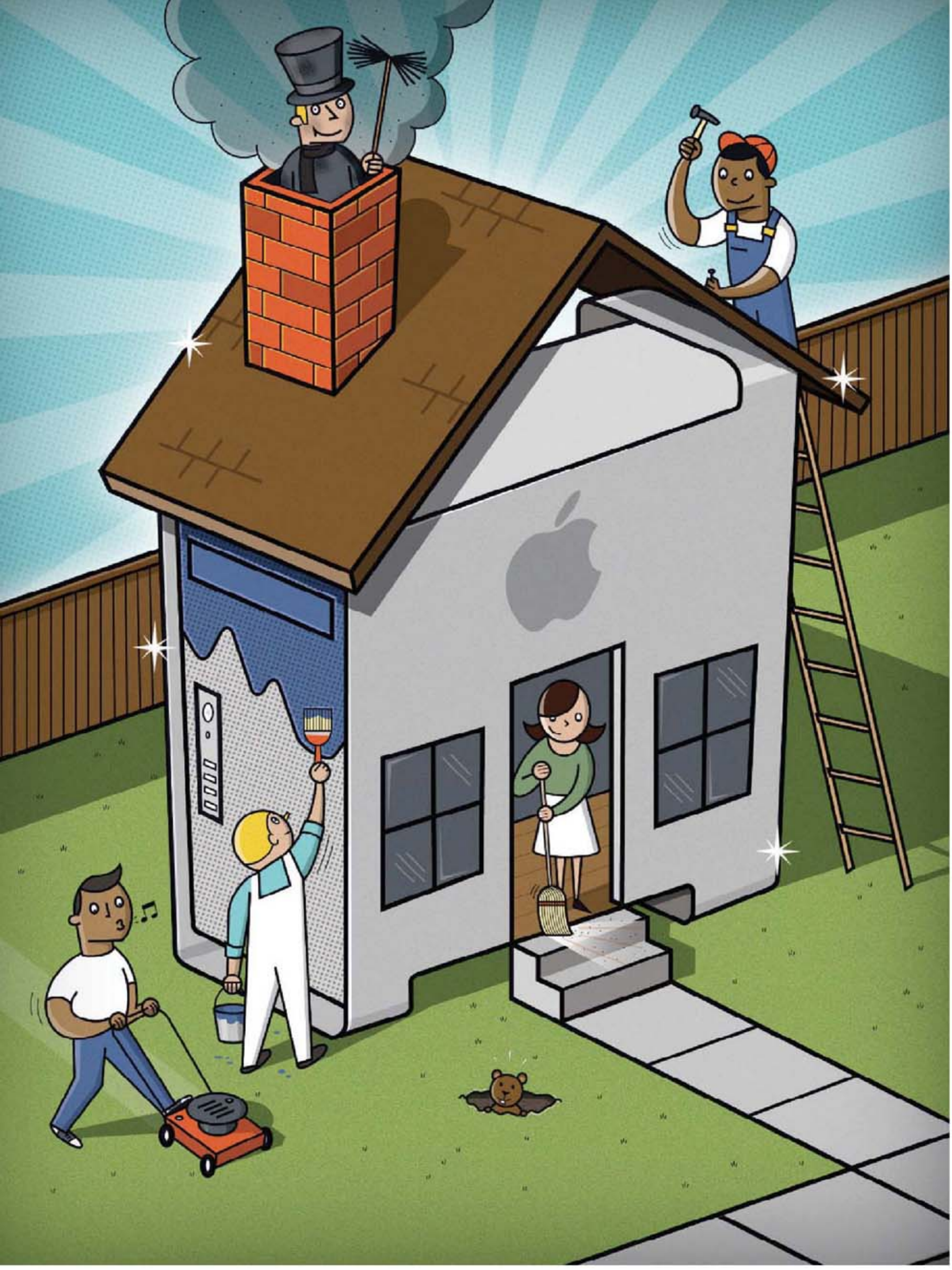


Essential Mac Maintenance

Keep your Mac in tip-top shape with these simple tasks

By Dan Frakes

Illustrations by Jack Gallagher

You know you need to change the oil in your car every 3,000 miles, clean your house's gutters every fall, and brush your teeth at least twice a day—but do you know what's necessary to keep your Mac in good shape? For the most part, Macs run smoothly. But as with most machines, a little preventative maintenance goes a long way toward *keeping* things running smoothly. Here's how to set things up right, and what you need to do to keep your Mac happy and healthy.

INSIDE **GET YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER** Page 54 | **MAC MAINTENANCE TOOLBOX** Page 57 | **REV UP YOUR ROUTINES** Page 58

Get Your House in Order

Setting your system up right can not only prevent problems but also make a difference if a problem arises in the future—be it a hard-drive meltdown, a natural disaster, or theft. Taking these steps when your Mac is brand new is easiest, but it's never too late to get organized.

Make Sure You Have the Right Stuff

Does your Mac have what it needs to run smoothly, safely, and efficiently?

Buy a Surge Protector or UPS You may be tempted to plug your Mac directly into a wall outlet. Don't. Power surges and lightning strikes can pass from power lines, phone lines, or your house's wiring to your wall outlets, and they can do significant damage to your computer. You need at least a quality surge protector, which acts as a sort of electrical firewall, protecting against destructive power incidents. (See macworld.com/3548 for some tips on finding a good one.) In addition, make sure that all AC-powered devices connected to your Mac, as well as phone and Internet cables, are protected—lightning and power surges can pass through any cable to zap your Mac.

A better option, especially if you have a desktop Mac, is an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). This device combines a surge protector with a battery designed to keep your computer running long enough for you to save your work and shut everything down safely if the power goes out. A UPS can also protect your computer from brownouts (sudden drops in power), erratic power, and line noise (radio-frequency and electromagnetic interference).

MAINTENANCE MUST-HAVE

Basic Security

Making sure your computer is protected from nefarious forces is important, too. For details about using Leopard's firewall to protect yourself, see macworld.com/3555. For tips on making secure passwords, see macworld.com/3049. And for other security tips, see macworld.com/3556.

You need a UPS that can handle the electrical requirements of *all* your connected equipment. The easy way to determine the UPS size you need is to use an online wizard, such as the one provided by APC (macworld.com/3549). Enter details about your setup, and the wizard will estimate your UPS needs (see "Get the Right UPS").

Two things to note: First, never connect a laser printer to one of the UPS's battery-backup outlets; laser printers can draw *a lot* of power, quickly draining the UPS battery and potentially damaging it. Instead, use a nonpowered outlet on the UPS or, even better, plug the printer into a separate surge protector. Second, although some UPS units provide phone, network, and cable jacks, the UPS's noise-filtering feature may cause network problems. If so, plug network cables into a separate surge protector.

Get Enough RAM Most Macs ship with at least 2GB of RAM these days, but some—the Mac mini, the 2.4GHz iMac, and the low-end MacBook—include only 1GB. Similarly, if you've got an older Mac, or if you've recently purchased a used model, there's a good chance it's got 1GB or less. This may suffice if all you do is check e-mail and browse the Web, but if you plan on running a number of programs simultaneously, working with photos and video, or playing games, you're bound to encounter performance problems and spinning beach balls.

If you're not sure whether a lack of RAM is your problem, you might try using Matt Neuburg's free MemoryStick (www.tidbits.com/matt). This utility displays your Mac's memory usage in the Dock or on a floating meter, letting you see at a glance when you're running short. If that's frequently the case, it's time to buy more. Thankfully, RAM is cheap these days—adding another gigabyte to an iMac will cost you $50 or less—and most Macs are easy to upgrade. (Apple provides do-it-yourself instructions for most Mac models in its user guides, at macworld.com/3550.)

Make Sure Your RAM Works It's a good idea to check a new Mac for hardware problems before you spend lots of time settling in. Perhaps the most important component to test is RAM—defective memory can cause problems that are maddeningly elusive to troubleshoot, such as random application crashes, system freezes, and data corruption. (This means you should also test any RAM you *add* to your Mac.)

WOOD PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BELANGER

Thankfully, doing so isn't difficult, although a comprehensive test can take a while. Apple Hardware Test, included on the Mac OS X Install disc that comes with all recent Macs, has an Extended Testing option that tests your RAM. (MacBook Air owners can use Apple Hardware Test by holding down the D key at startup.)

I prefer the more-thorough approach provided by Tony Scaminaci's $1.39 Memtest 4.21 (www.memtestosx.org). This program tests every bit of your RAM modules, as many times as you choose, verifying that they correctly store and read data. (Apple's Hardware Test does only one pass.) Doing several passes can take a day or more, but if your RAM checks out, it's probably not going to give you problems. The hitch is that you have to run Memtest from the command line, either at startup or in Terminal. (For details, see macworld.com/3551.) Use Kelley Computing's Rember 0.3.4b instead (donation requested; macworld.com/2639) if you prefer something with a graphical user interface (see "Test Your Memory").

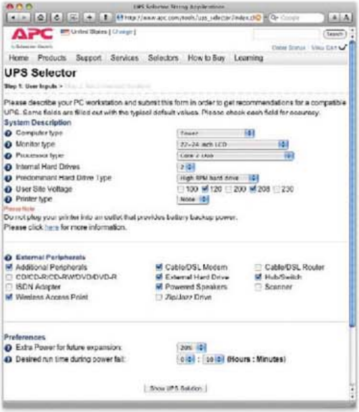
Prepare for Emergencies

Many people take elaborate precautions to prepare for earthquakes, tornados, or hurricanes but never give a second thought to preparing for computer catastrophes. Here are a few simple steps that can help you survive mishaps both major and minor.

Create a Troubleshooting Account If you ever have a problem with your Mac—for example, a program that won't behave or an account that won't let you log in—there's a good chance the problem is with your user account rather than with the OS itself. The easiest way to find out is to see whether the problem goes away when you log in to a *different* account—one with fresh settings and without third-party add-ons and system hacks. This pristine account can also come in handy if you need to perform maintenance or repairs, or if your own account won't let you log in at all. But you need to create a troubleshooting account *before* trouble happens.

To do so, open the Accounts preference pane. If you see a locked-padlock icon, click on it and enter your administrator password. Click on the plus sign (+), and then choose Administrator from the New Account pop-up menu in the sheet that appears. Give the account an obvious name and a short name (I use *Troubleshooting Account* and *trouble*, respectively) and a password you'll remember. When you're done, click on Create Account.

This account should remain unused. The next time you experience a problem, log in to the account. If everything works fine there, you will know to start your troubleshooting efforts in *your user folder*/Library folder. For help, see our Leopard troubleshooting guide at macworld.com/3552.


APC
United States [Change]
Search
Order Status | View Cart
Home Products Support Services Selectors How to Buy Learning

UPS Selector

Step 1. User Inputs >

Please describe your PC workstation and submit this form in order to get recommendations for a compatible UPS. Some fields are filled out with the typical default values. Please check each field for accuracy.

System Description

Computer type: Tower
Monitor type: 22-24 inch LCD
Processor type: Core 2 Duo
Internal Hard Drives: 2
Predominant Hard Drive Type: High RPM hard drive
User Site Voltage: ☐ 100 ☑ 120 ☐ 200 ☑ 208 ☐ 230
Printer type: None

Please Note
Do not plug your printer into an outlet that provides battery backup power.
Please click here for more information.

External Peripherals
☑ Additional Peripherals
☐ CD/CD-R/CD-RW/DVD/DVD-R
☐ ISDN Adapter
☑ Wireless Access Point
☑ Cable/DSL Modem
☑ External Hard Drive
☑ Powered Speakers
☐ Zip/Jazz Drive
☐ Cable/DSL Router
☑ Hub/Switch
☐ Scanner

Preferences
Extra Power for future expansion: 20%
Desired run time during power fail: 0 : 10 (Hours : Minutes)

Get the Right UPS To protect against power surges and lightning strikes, nothing beats an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). APC's online UPS Selector lets you enter the details of your system so you can estimate what size you need.

Keep a Bootable Emergency Disk on Hand In case you experience a problem so severe that your Mac won't even start up, your OS X Install disc—either the one that came with your Mac or the one you bought to upgrade to Leopard—includes a copy of Apple's Disk Utility, which you can use to perform some basic disk repairs. In dire circumstances, you can use this disc to reinstall OS X.

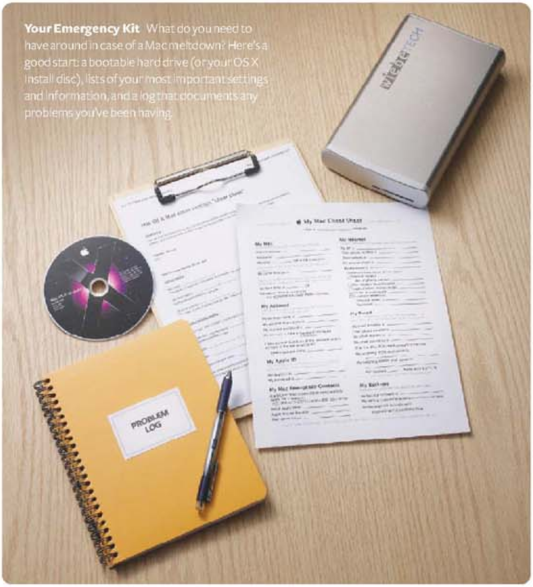
But what if you'd rather use a program that offers more-comprehensive

MAINTENANCE MYTH

"You need to run the Unix maintenance scripts."

You may have heard about a collection of magical Unix maintenance scripts that Mac OS X is supposed to run automatically. The story goes that because these scripts are scheduled to run in the middle of the night, putting your Mac to sleep or shutting it down prevents them from running—so you need to run them manually. It's true that there are Unix scripts that perform certain cleanup tasks in the early morning—one script every day, a second script once a week, and a third once a month. It's also true that if you *shut down* your Mac every night, the scripts don't run.

But the situation isn't as dire as you might think. First, if you put your Mac to sleep at night, instead of shutting it down, OS X will run the missed scripts the next time you wake up your Mac. Second, the tasks these scripts perform aren't so important that a few missed executions will adversely affect your Mac. The main script tasks involve cleaning out old log and temporary files and rebuilding Unix's `locate` and `whatis` databases. If you're a Unix geek, leave your Mac on (or asleep) on Friday nights so the weekly script can run at its normal Saturday-morning time. If you're not, you'll likely be fine running the scripts every few months. To easily run the scripts manually, use Mike Vande Ven Jr.'s free Dashboard widget Maintidget 1.4 (macworld.com/3564).



Your Emergency Kit What do you need to have around in case of a Mac meltdown? Here's a good start: a bootable hard drive (or your OS X Install disc), lists of your most important settings and information, and a log that documents any problems you've been having.

repair features, such as Alsoft's $100 DiskWarrior 4.1 (www.alsoft.com) or Micromat's $98 TechTool Pro 5 (www.micromat.com)? Or what if you've got a MacBook Air and don't want to carry its big, bulky optical drive with you at all times? In either case, you need a bootable hard drive. You can use a separate internal drive—*not* another partition of your boot drive—or an external FireWire or USB drive. Install OS X onto it so you'll be able to boot from it, and then install all the troubleshooting utilities you think you might need.

Safely Store Your Software Discs Although more and more people are keeping backups off-site, few do the same with software-installation discs, which are often worth thousands of dollars. The fact is, you probably don't need to keep your software discs close at hand. So instead, keep them safe. I recommend storing these discs—as well as physical copies of software you've downloaded from the Web—separately from your Mac. You might keep them at work, at home, at a friend's house, or in a safe-deposit box.

Chances are, you'll need an original software disc only if your Mac is having problems or, worse, if it's stolen or damaged. But if you want to keep a particular disc handy, use Disk Utility or Roxio's $80 Toast 9 (www.roxio.com) to make a copy, and then store the copy near your computer. At the very least, invest in a media-rated fireproof safe and keep your discs in it.

Ensure That You're Insured No matter how prepared you are, accidents happen—laptops get dropped, coffee gets spilled, computers get stolen, and natural disasters strike. Check your homeowner's or renter's insurance to see what—and how much—coverage it provides for your computer and peripherals. If that coverage isn't sufficient, consider insurance specifically for your computer. For example, Safeware (www.safeware.com) provides policies that cover your computer, your peripherals, and even your software and personal data against theft, accidental damage, and power incidents.

You might also consider an AppleCare Protection Plan (price varies by Mac model; macworld.com/1169). This

MAINTENANCE MYTH

"You should consistently clean your caches."

To improve performance, Mac OS X and some programs store frequently accessed data in *cache* files. When the OS or a program needs this data, it can access the cache files instead of having to search for the original sources. Many people recommend deleting cache files regularly, arguing that the files sometimes become corrupt. However, deleting cache files can have unwelcome consequences. For example, deleting Leopard's font cache files resets the disabled/enabled status of every font in Font Book.

Deleting cache files is better done as a troubleshooting step. If a cache file ever goes bad, it could cause problems with the program or function it's associated with. For example, if your Web browser seems slow or crashes each time you launch it, there could be a problem with its cache files. Quitting the browser, deleting its cache files, and then re-launching may fix the problem. If you're having problems with fonts or garbled text, a corrupt font cache may be to blame. Mark Douma's $10 Font Finagler 1.0 (macworld.com/3358) can verify and, if necessary, remove your font caches. If you suspect problems with system-level cache files, look to Northern Softworks' $9 Leopard Cache Cleaner 4 (www.northernsoftworks.com).

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BELANGER

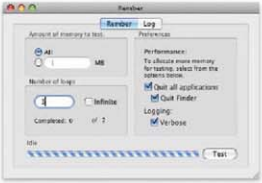
extends the warranty on your computer—as well as any display, AirPort hardware (including a Time Capsule), Apple-installed RAM, and MacBook Air SuperDrive purchased with the computer—by an additional two years. But note that AppleCare is a service warranty, not insurance. It covers *only* technical support and manufacturing problems that require repair.

Keep Good Records If you ever upgrade your hard drive, switch to a different Mac, or re-install OS X, you'll probably need to re-enter software licenses and registration numbers. Similarly, if you ever need to contact technical support, or if your Mac or its accessories are ever stolen, you'll need serial numbers and detailed information about the equipment.

One of the simplest precautions you can take is to keep detailed records of all this information. I recommend creating a simple spreadsheet or text document that lists each piece of software and hardware you own, along with its model or version number, serial or registration number, specifications and features (in the case of a computer), and date of purchase.

Apple also provides two helpful forms you can print and fill out: a My Mac Cheat Sheet for your Mac's vitals and e-mail and Internet configurations (macworld.com/3553), and an Email Settings Cheat Sheet for detailed e-mail account settings (macworld.com/3554). Be sure to *print* this information. Do not store any of it *on* your computer, because you won't be able to access it if your Mac goes kaput (or missing).

Finally, document any problems you experience. If your Mac starts misbehaving, jot down the date, the time, and what you were doing when your computer started acting up. If the problem is reproducible, write down the steps that cause it. This data will help immensely if you end up having to call Apple or another vendor for support, or if you visit an Apple Store Genius Bar.



Number of loops: 3

Completed: 0 of 3

Performance:

To allocate more memory for testing, select from the options below.

☑ Quit all applications

☑ Quit Finder

Logging:

☑ Verbose

Idle

Test Your Memory Bad RAM can lead to many hard-to-diagnose problems. You can use Rember to test yours for trouble *before* you get tripped up.

The Mac Maintenance Toolbox

Plenty of utilities and programs can help you repair and maintain your Mac. Some provide solutions for a multitude of virtual ailments (and perform some of those functions better than others); some other utilities do just one or two things very well. Here are a few of our favorites.

Product	COMPANY	PRICE	RATING	COMMENTS	FIND CODE[A]
Apple Hardware Test	Apple	free	N/A	Included on recent Mac OS X Install discs, it performs basic tests of RAM, logic boards, video RAM, and other internal hardware.	N/A
Carbon Copy Cloner 3.1	Mike Bombich	donation requested	🐁🐁🐁🐁½	Backup utility can create a clone of your hard drive.	macworld.com/3156
Compost 1.9	Fastforward Software	$20	🐁🐁🐁🐁	Trash enhancer automatically empties the Trash according to a schedule or the size or location of Trash contents.	macworld.com/3622
Disk Utility[B]	Apple	free	N/A	Included with every version of Mac OS X, it can repair your drive and "repair" disk permissions.	N/A
DiskWarrior 4.1	Alsoft	$100	🐁🐁🐁🐁🐁	Performs drive directory repair and SMART monitoring.	macworld.com/2503
Drive Genius 2	Prosoft Engineering	$99	not yet rated[C]	Performs drive repair and maintenance, as well as defragmenting and partitioning.	N/A
Font Finagler 1.0	Mark Douma	$10	not yet rated[D]	Checks and, if necessary, deletes font caches.	N/A
GrandPerspective 0.9.11	Eriban	free	🐁🐁🐁🐁	Lets you quickly view disk usage.	macworld.com/2433
Leopard Cache Cleaner 4	Northern Softworks	$9	not yet rated[E]	Clears cache files and tweaks the OS. (Be careful when using features you don't understand.)	N/A
Maintidget 1.4	Mike Vande Ven Jr.	free	not yet rated	Dashboard widget lets you manually run Unix maintenance scripts.	N/A
Memtest 4.21	Tony Scaminaci	$1.39	🐁🐁🐁🐁	Command-line tool thoroughly tests your RAM.	macworld.com/3574
Rember 0.3.4b	Kelley Computing	donation requested	not yet rated	Gives the Memtest utility a graphical user interface, making it easier for most people to use.	N/A
SMARTReporter 2.3.7	Core Code	free	🐁🐁🐁🐁	Automatically monitors SMART status of internal hard drive(s).	macworld.com/3574
SuperDuper 2.5	Shirt Pocket Software	$28	🐁🐁🐁🐁🐁	Backup utility creates a clone of your hard drive that you can keep on the same disk as your Time Machine backups.	macworld.com/3574
TechTool Pro 5[F]	Micromat	$98	not yet rated[G]	Performs drive repair and maintenance, as well as hardware testing.	N/A
Time Machine[H]	Apple	free	N/A	Mac OS X 10.5's built-in backup utility.	N/A
WhatSize 4.2	ID-Design	$13	🐁🐁🐁🐁	Lets you quickly view disk usage.	macworld.com/2433

N/A = not applicable. [A] Typing in find codes after *macworld.com/* directs you to a product's review or overview. For example, macworld.com/2503 contains a review of DiskWarrior 4. [B] Included with all versions of Mac OS X. [C] Drive Genius 2 is not yet able to make a Leopard boot disk. We'll review the more compatible version when it ships. [D] We did rate a previous version, Font Finagler 0.5.3, at 🐁🐁🐁½ (macworld.com/3572). [E] We did rate a previous version, Tiger Cache Cleaner, at 🐁🐁🐁½ (macworld.com/3572). [F] Expected to ship by press time. [G] We did rate a previous version, TechTool Pro 4.0.1, at 🐁🐁🐁½ (macworld.com/3575). [H] Included with the $129 Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard).

REV UP YOUR Routines

Mac OS X is relatively hassle-free—most people can get by without doing any routine maintenance at all. But you can greatly reduce your chances of problems, both big and small, by regularly performing a few simple tasks. See "The Mac Maintenance Toolbox" for products that can help.

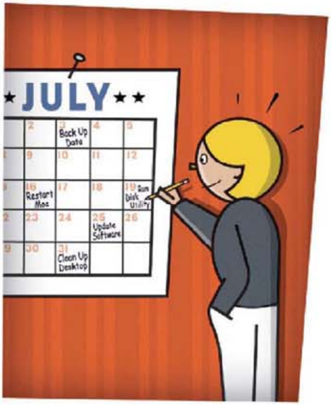
Back Up Your Data

There are two types of people: those who've lost data and those who will. So perhaps the most important step you can take is to accept the fact that problems are inevitable—and make sure your safety net is in place.

Leopard's built-in backup system, Time Machine, makes it very easy to keep copies of your work. I use Time Machine to automatically back up all my personal data (see macworld.com/3557 for details about how to get started). But I also create a bootable clone—an exact copy of my hard drive—using Shirt Pocket's $28 SuperDuper 2.5 (www.shirt-pocket.com), and update it each day. If my Mac's hard drive ever bites the dust, I can boot off the clone and be up and running in no time. (With SuperDuper, you can even keep the clone and your Time Machine backups on the same external drive.)

In addition, I keep a backup in a different location, in case disaster strikes my office. For more information about how and why you might combine Time Machine with other backup methods, see macworld.com/3429. If you don't use Leopard, see macworld.com/2596 for help developing a backup plan.

How Often How much work can you afford to lose? An hour's worth? A day's? Back up accordingly. (If you use Time Machine, it will take care of scheduling backups for you.)



Keep Software Up-to-Date

Why suffer from bugs that have already been fixed or security issues that have already been patched? Software vendors regularly release product updates that contain new features or quash problems and incompatibilities.

Schedule Apple Updates Keeping OS X and other Apple software up-to-date is easy. Choose Software Update from the Apple menu, and this built-in utility will open and check Apple's servers to see whether any new software is available. Alternatively, tell Software Update to check for updates automatically: Open the Software Update preference pane, click on the Scheduled Check tab, and select the Check For Updates option. Software Update can check daily, weekly, or monthly and, if you like, automatically download any updates.

Keep Other Software Current Many third-party programs—Microsoft

MAINTENANCE MYTH

"You should defragment your hard drive regularly."

If you save a file to your hard drive when there isn't a large-enough block of contiguous free space for it, the file is broken into several smaller pieces. This is called *file fragmentation*. Some amount of fragmentation is normal, especially as your hard drive gets full. But too much file fragmentation hinders performance—the more fragmented your drive is, the harder it has to work to read each file. Because of this, people have long recommended *defragmenting* drives as routine maintenance (in other words, regularly using a utility to rearrange file fragments on your hard drive so that each file resides in a contiguous block of hard-drive space). But with Mac OS X, this procedure isn't necessary for everyone. The Mac's file system, HFS+, is quite good at avoiding file fragmentation, and OS X (10.3 and later) automatically defragments some files. Also, the performance of today's hard drives is so good that many users won't notice even moderate fragmentation. File fragmentation is an issue primarily for people with almost-full hard drives and people who work with very large files or large amounts of data. If your drive is almost full, a better option is to free up space or upgrade to a larger drive. People who truly need to defragment can use utilities such as Prosoft Engineering's $99 Drive Genius 2 (www.prosofteng.com) or TechTool Pro.

Office, for example—have a similar feature that automatically checks for new versions and lets you know when one is available. You'll often find this feature in a program's preferences window (typically accessed through the *program name*: Preferences menu).

If you have lots of third-party programs that don't check automatically, take advantage of a site, such as VersionTracker.com or MacUpdate.com, that maintains a free list of software updates. A membership with either site ($50 per year for VersionTracker, or $40 per year for MacUpdate) buys you regular e-mail alerts about updated programs, as well as software that can track updates for the programs installed on your Mac and even download the updates for you (see "Track New Versions").

One caveat is in order here. On rare occasions, an update will *introduce* bugs or incompatibilities. So some people prefer to wait a few days before installing new versions of software—especially OS X updates—to see whether the "early adopters" have any problems.

How Often Set Software Update, and any other automated utilities, to check for updates daily or weekly. If you're checking manually, do so every few weeks.

Monitor Hard-Drive Health

A hard drive is an amazing collection of technologies: a few small platters, motors, and sensors can store gigabytes of data very reliably. But the technology isn't perfect. You need to give your drives periodic checkups.

Check Your Directory Files are written to and erased from your hard drive by the thousands, or even the tens of thousands, each day. Over time, the *directory*—data on your drive that keeps track of exactly where each file is stored—can become fragmented, which means that it's split into sections across your drive. This can not only impair performance, but also damage the directory and make it inaccurate. Checking the directory periodically, and optimizing or repairing it when necessary, is one of the best ways to avoid system problems and data loss.

Apple's Disk Utility can do basic directory maintenance. Launch the utility and select your hard drive in the list on the left. Click on the First Aid tab and then on Verify Disk. If Disk Utility tells you that the volume needs to be repaired, you'll have to boot from your OS X Install disc. If you don't have that disc or another bootable OS X volume handy, you can also use Safe Mode or single-user mode at startup to repair the directory (see macworld.com/3558).

A more thorough option is to use DiskWarrior, which creates a new, optimized directory. DiskWarrior requires that you reboot from the DiskWarrior CD, or from a different hard drive containing the program, to repair your startup disk.

Watch Your Hardware Of course, if your hard drive's *hardware* is failing, the best directory in the world won't matter. Today's hard drives include Self-Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Technology (SMART). This feature monitors a slew of performance indicators inside your drive and then determines whether the drive is operating normally.

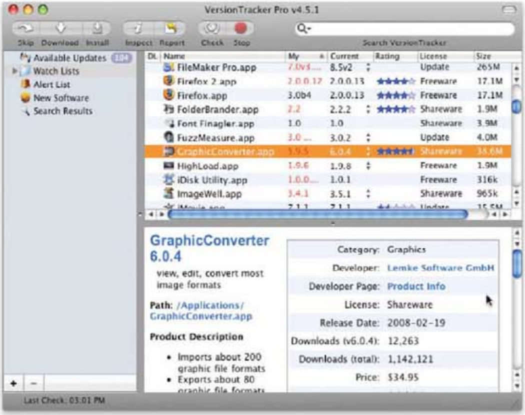
The problem with SMART is that you need special software in order to easily see a drive's status. Disk Utility displays each disk's SMART status at the bottom of the window, but opening Disk Utility just to monitor SMART status is a hassle. An easier approach is to use a utility that alerts you if a drive's status changes. Commercial disk utilities such as DiskWarrior, TechTool Pro, and Prosoft's $99 Drive Genius 2 (www.prosofteng.com) provide such automatic monitoring. Core Code's free SMARTReporter 2.3.7 (www.corecode.at) also works well.

How Often Check your hard drive's directory once a month and repair as needed. Use a utility to set up automatic SMART monitoring.

Restart Your Mac

OS X is so stable that most people can go weeks or months without having to restart their Macs. Although this is convenient, it has drawbacks. For one, the more programs you launch and quit, the more OS X's virtual-memory system has to swap data to and from the hard drive. In addition, some programs have memory "leaks" that cause them to use more and more memory over time. The result is that your Mac may seem slower after it's been running for a few days or weeks.

The solution is to periodically restart your Mac; this frees up RAM, purges virtual-memory swap files, and regenerates some cache files. Alternatively, simply shut down at night, or when you know you won't be using your Mac for a



DL	Name	My	Current	Rating	License	Size
	FileMaker Pro.app	7.0v3....	8.5v2		Update	265M
	Firefox 2.app	2.0.0.12	2.0.0.13	★★★★☆	Freeware	17.1M
	Firefox.app	3.0b4	2.0.0.13	★★★★☆	Freeware	17.1M
	FolderBrander.app	2.2	2.2.2	★★★★☆	Shareware	1.9M
	Font Finagler.app	1.0	1.0		Shareware	3.9M
	FuzzMeasure.app	3.0 ...	3.0.2		Update	4.0M
	GraphicConverter.app	5.9.5	6.0.4	★★★★★	Shareware	38.6M
	HighLoad.app	1.9.6	1.9.8		Freeware	1.9M
	iDisk Utility.app	1.0.0....	1.0.1		Freeware	316k
	ImageWell.app	3.4.1	3.5.1		Shareware	965k

GraphicConverter 6.0.4

view, edit, convert most image formats

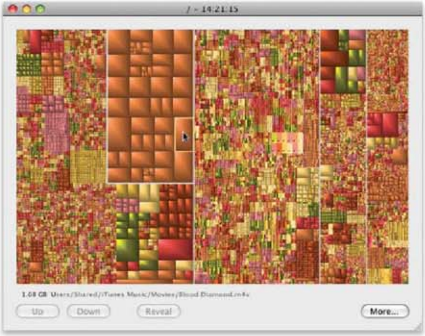
Path: /Applications/GraphicConverter.app

Product Description

- Imports about 200 graphic file formats
- Exports about 80 graphic file formats

Category: Graphics
Developer: Lemke Software GmbH
Developer Page: Product Info
License: Shareware
Release Date: 2008-02-19
Downloads (v6.0.4): 12,263
Downloads (total): 1,142,121
Price: $34.95

Track New Versions VersionTracker Pro makes keeping your software up-to-date easy. It monitors www.versiontracker.com and alerts you when new versions of your programs become available.



Find Your Biggest Files GrandPerspective can give you a graphical view of what's hogging your hard-drive space.

while. That approach conserves energy, too. (You can even use OS X's Energy Saver preference pane to schedule automatic shutdowns and startups.)

How Often Restart your Mac once every week or two, or whenever you're experiencing slowdowns.

Check Hard-Drive Space

Today's hard drives hold more stuff than ever, but we also seem to find more and more stuff to store on them. And if your hard drive gets too full, performance can suffer. What's worse, if OS X tries to save user data or virtual-memory files to your hard drive and can't find enough free space, you can lose data.

How much free space is enough? This is a point of frequent debate, but my personal guideline is approximately ten percent of your hard-drive capacity or 10GB, whichever is less. If you work with programs that store large temporary files—for example, DVD-burning software generally requires free space equal to the size of the disc you're burning—be sure to leave more room for that.

Erase Extra Stuff The first step is simply to get rid of things you don't use, such as programs you never launch, movies you never watch, and music you never listen to. If you've got old files that you're keeping for posterity but don't need on hand, consider burning them to disc and removing the originals from your drive. (But be aware that optical discs can go bad over time, so you might want to re-burn them every couple of years.)

You might also have space-hogging files and folders you're not aware of. My favorite tools for finding them are Eriban's free GrandPerspective 0.9.11 (macworld.com/1398) and ID-Design's $13 WhatSize 4.2 (macworld.com/1400). Both of these utilities scan your hard drive to show you which files and folders are taking up the most space. WhatSize's column view is better for finding the largest files and folders in each directory, while GrandPerspective's graphical interface lets you quickly spot the largest files—or groups of files—on your drive (see "Find Your Biggest Files"). Once you've located the worst offenders, delete the unnecessary ones (but, of course, never delete something if you don't know what it is).

Empty the Trash Your Mac's Trash is easy to empty—just control-click on its icon in the Dock and choose Empty Trash. But some people *never* do so, thus ending up with gigabytes of unwanted data on their drives. If you tend to forget, set up a repeating event in Apple's iCal (/Applications) to remind you. Alternatively, check out Fastforward Software's $20 Compost 1.9 (www.fastforwardsw.com), a utility that provides many options for automatically processing deleted files.

Buy a Bigger Drive If deleting unwanted files doesn't free up enough room, it's time to buy a larger drive. The good news is that internal and external hard drives are relatively inexpensive these days (see our most recent reviews at macworld.com/3559).

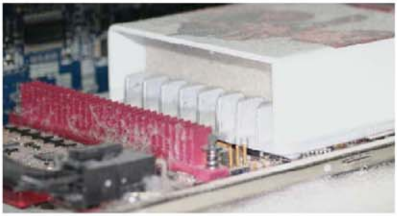
How Often Clean up your hard drive every few months, or whenever it starts filling up. And don't forget to empty the Trash occasionally.

Run Only What You Need

The more programs you run at once on your Mac, the more RAM you use, and the harder your Mac's processor(s) must work. If you notice things slowing down, it's a good idea to look at the Dock and quit any open programs you aren't actively using. However, there are probably *other* programs running, too.

Nix Login Items Your Mac likely has a good number of running programs that you didn't launch yourself, and even some that you can't see in the Dock. (The latter are commonly called background processes.) One way to cut down on this superfluous activity is to weed out items that launch automatically when you log in to your account. Go to the Accounts preference pane, select your user account, and then click on the Login Items tab. Glance through the list to see if there's anything you don't want running. Quite a few programs automatically add themselves or their support processes, so you may find items related to software you tried and discarded, or to add-ons you thought you'd uninstalled.

Gumming Up the Works Without regular cleaning, a Mac's internals can get so dusty that components—such as this video card—may stop working properly. You probably won't be able to figure out why until you open the case.



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MAINTENANCE MYTH

"You should repair permissions regularly."

Mac OS X's *permissions* determine the access each user has to each item on a hard drive. If certain files have the wrong permissions, you can experience problems. So you'll commonly hear that you need to regularly use Disk Utility's Repair Disk Permissions feature on your startup drive. But contrary to popular belief, repairing permissions—a procedure which simply *resets* permissions to a known state—works only on a particular subset of OS X system files. It doesn't affect user files, nor does it affect third-party files or programs. In other words, it's unlikely that repairing permissions will prevent problems. I recommend repairing permissions as a troubleshooting tool. If you ever do have a problem with system-level permissions, your Mac will likely behave oddly, and you'll usually be able to use the Repair Disk Permissions function *then* to fix the problem without any data loss or long-term effects. (For a comprehensive look at what you need to know about repairing permissions, see macworld.com/3563.)

If you find something you don't want, simply select it and click on the minus-sign button (–) or press your keyboard's delete key. If you don't recognize an item, hold the mouse cursor over its name for a few seconds. A small tooltip will appear, displaying the path to the item—and hopefully providing some context for the item's purpose. (Deleting an item from Login Items doesn't quit it; doing so just prevents it from launching the next time you log in. The easiest way to quit it is to log out of your user account and then back in.)

Dump Dashboard Widgets Many of us regularly try out new and interesting Dashboard widgets. But like programs, widgets use memory and processor cycles when running. Keep open only those you regularly use. To quit a widget, activate Dashboard (F12 by default), hold down the option key, and then click on the *X* that appears in the widget's upper left corner.

How Often Weed out your Login Items list once every couple of months (do it more often if you frequently try new software). Disable unused Dashboard widgets whenever you install a new widget.

MAINTENANCE MUST-HAVE

iCal Reminders

Wondering how you'll remember all of Dan Frakes's advice? Download the Macworld Maintenance Calendar from macworld.com/3562, import it into iCal, and then customize it to fit your situation. You'll never forget your maintenance chores again.

Relaunch Web Browsers

When it comes to programs that grab more and more memory over time, perhaps the biggest offenders are Web browsers. The longer they're running, the more RAM they demand. Eventually, they can bog down your Mac's overall performance.

Restarting your Mac is one way to solve this problem, but before going to that extreme, try quitting and then relaunching your browser. This will often free up a surprising amount of memory, and most modern browsers can restore the windows and tabs that were open when you quit. (In Safari, choose History: Reopen All Windows From Last Session.)

How Often Restart your browser if it's been open for a while and you notice your Mac slowing down.

Keep a Clean Machine

It's important to keep your Mac clean—virtually and physically—for optimum performance.

Tidy Your Desktop OS X treats each item on your desktop as a separate window. That means every file and folder you store there uses memory and CPU resources. The more powerful your computer is, the more items your desktop can hold without noticeable effects. But eventually you'll see more spinning beach balls and slower Finder actions.

You may find it easier to sort through lots of desktop detritus if you open the Desktop folder (*your user folder*/Desktop). You can then browse your desktop's contents in list view and sort by type, date, or another attribute. File away or delete anything you can.

Keep Your Mac Free of Muck Many people underestimate the importance of keeping the physical structures of their Macs clean. Of course you want to keep coffee, soda, and other liquids from spilling into your keyboard or on your MacBook. But other, less obvious, substances can gunk things up.

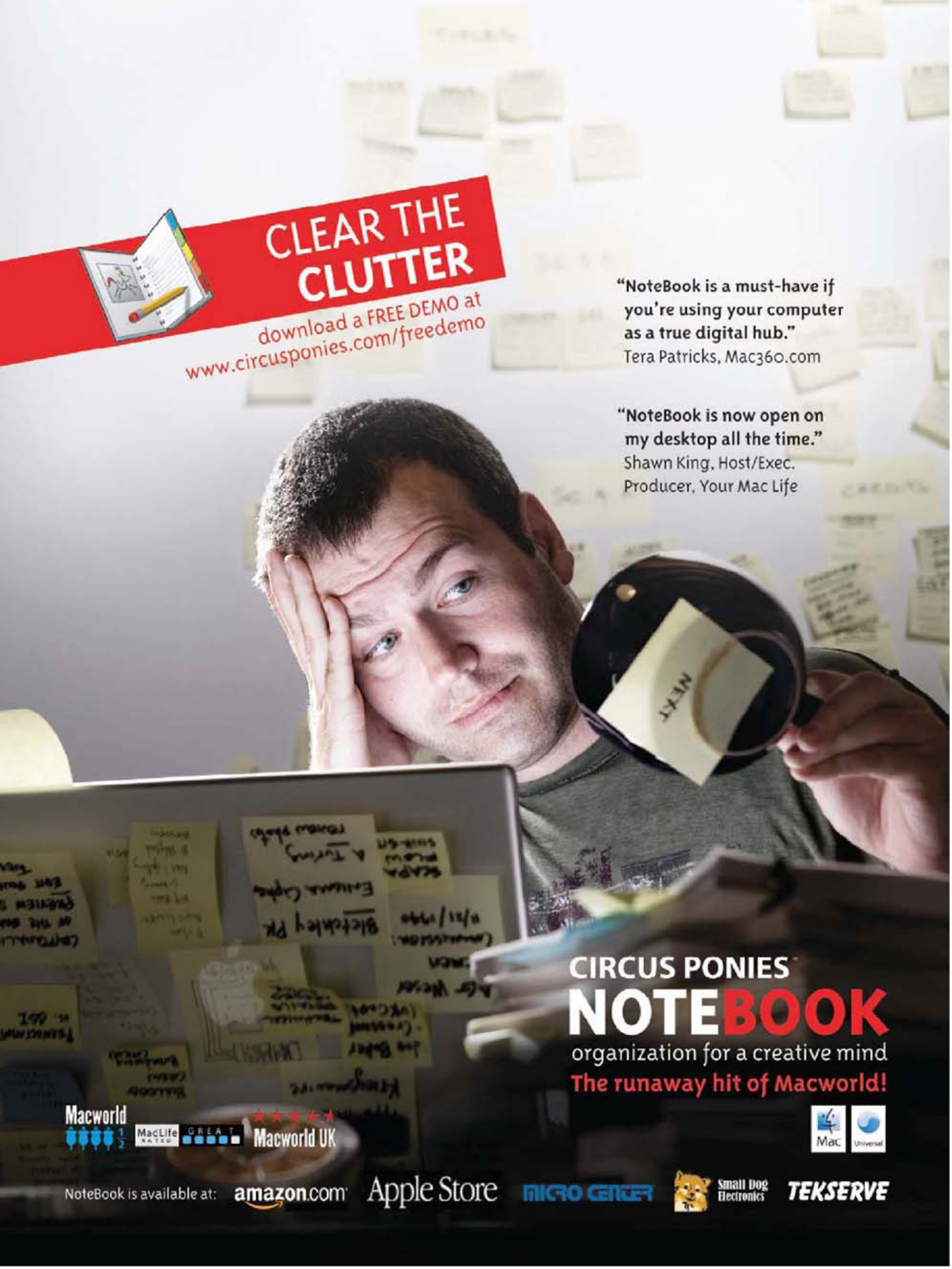
For example, crumbs from months of working lunches can eventually interfere with your keyboard's switches, preventing certain keys from registering (not to mention that a dirty keyboard is, well, *gross*). Dust and pet hair can build up around your computer's vents, and on internal components. This can shorten the life of your computer's components, and can also cause seemingly random lockups and shutdowns when your Mac overheats (see "Gumming Up the Works").

Luckily, keeping your Mac clean doesn't take much effort. You can use a damp cloth to wipe down your Mac's exterior. Compressed-air canisters work well for clearing the dust from your Mac's vents and loosening much of the junk that's fallen into your keyboard. (Don't use a standard vacuum. You need a special antistatic model.)

If you have a Mac Pro or an older Mac tower, open it every few months to check for dust buildup. Avoid eating over your keyboard or typing with sticky hands. (For more info about keeping laptops and LCDs clean, see macworld.com/3560.)

How Often Tidy up your desktop whenever you start to notice Finder slowdowns, or when you can no longer quickly find a file you've put there. Clean your Mac once a month or whenever necessary.

Senior Editor **Dan Frakes** has been writing about Mac maintenance and troubleshooting since the early days of the Power Macintosh.



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Empty Your Inbox

3 easy steps to taming e-mail clutter once and for all

By Joe Kissell ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRISTOPH HITZ

As I write this sentence, my e-mail application's inbox is empty. In fact, it's almost always empty at the end of the day. This seemingly amazing feat didn't require a great deal of technological sophistication, organizational wizardry, or monklike discipline. I decided an empty inbox was necessary to preserve my sanity, and through trial and error—along with some helpful hints from productivity experts like Merlin Mann and David Allen (see "Get Inspired")—I eventually settled on a simple system that makes it possible.

Maintaining an empty (or nearly empty) inbox can make you more productive, result in fewer lost messages, and reduce stress by letting you focus on your most important e-mail. While it may take some initial effort to get there, changing the way you deal with e-mail doesn't have to be difficult. I've devised a simple three-step process for cleaning out your inbox and dealing with incoming mail. Although a few of my suggestions involve taking advantage of new features in Apple's Mail 3 (●●●●; macworld.com/3510) and Microsoft Entourage 2008 (●●●●; macworld.com/3346), you can put most of my advice into action regardless of what e-mail client you use (see "The E-mail Edge," on page 32, for a comparative review of e-mail clients). And even if your goal isn't to have a completely empty inbox, you can adapt many of these steps to fit your own strategy.

ACTION
Later
FILED

Step 1: Turn Down the Volume

If a broken pipe is flooding your basement, you need to turn off the water before you worry about cleaning up. It's the same with e-mail: before worrying about what's already in your inbox, you should do whatever you can to decrease the volume of incoming messages.

Zap Spam

Reports by antispam companies put the amount of spam sent in 2007 at anywhere from 71 percent to an astonishing 97 percent of all e-mail messages. So start by turning on your e-mail client's junk-mail filter. In Mail, choose Mail: Preferences, click on Junk Mail, and make sure Enable Junk Mail Filtering is selected. Select the Move It To The Junk Mailbox option, but deselect Message Is Addressed Using My Full Name (many spam messages do use your full name). Also select the Trust Junk Mail Headers Set By My Internet Service Provider option.

In Entourage, choose Tools: Junk E-mail Protection, click on the Level tab, and make sure the level is set to High.

If you continue to receive a lot of spam in your inbox, you may be better served by a third-party utility such as C-Command's excellent SpamSieve (★★★★★; $30; macworld.com/2671), which employs sophisticated tactics to separate the wheat from the chaff. (For other tricks that keep spammers at bay, see "Stop Today's Spam" at macworld.com/2749).

Opt Out

When you make online purchases, join social networking sites, or do any of numerous other activities on the Web, get in the habit of unchecking the box that gives the company permission to e-mail you. And if you forgot to opt out initially, do so the next time you hear from one of these companies (which often requires going to the Web site, logging in, and changing your preferences).

Use the Right Tool

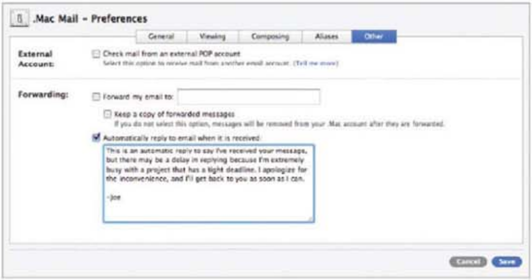
In some situations, using iChat or another instant messaging program is faster and more efficient than e-mail—and it reduces the number of messages in your Inbox. Chat is ideal for conversations involving a lot of back-and-forth but not a lot of detail. Mail 3 shows you when people in your iChat Buddy list are available by displaying a colored dot, representing their iChat status, next to senders' names. (If you don't see this, open Mail's preferences, click on the Viewing tab, and turn on the Show Online Buddy Status option.)

Set Expectations

Most e-mail servers have an out-of-office feature that can send a canned reply to your correspondents when you're gone for an extended period. But these autoreplies can be useful even when you're facing an important deadline or simply don't have time to send out replies for a day or two. Craft a brief autoresponse saying that you've received the message but your reply may be delayed. Your correspondents will be reassured that you've received their notes, and will be less likely to send follow-up messages.

If you use .Mac for e-mail, go to www.mac.com, log in, click on the Mail link, and then click on the Preferences link. Select the Other tab, turn on the Automatically Reply To Email When It Is Received option, and then enter a message in the field provided (see "Expect Delays"). If you use Entourage with an Exchange Server account, select your account in the folder list. Choose Tools: Out Of Office, click on Send Out Of Office Messages, and then enter your message in the Reply To Message With field. If you use another e-mail provider, check its Web site for instructions.

If your e-mail provider doesn't offer any sort of out-of-office feature, you can achieve something similar (though without the one-reply-per-person option) by using a mail rule (see "Rules for a Cleaner Inbox").



External Account: ☐ Check mail from an external POP account
Select this option to receive mail from another email account. (Tell me more)

Forwarding: ☐ Forward my email to:
☐ Keep a copy of forwarded messages
If you do not select this option, messages will be removed from your .Mac account after they are forwarded.
☑ Automatically reply to email when it is received

This is an automatic reply to say I've received your message, but there may be a delay in replying because I'm extremely busy with a project that has a tight deadline. I apologize for the inconvenience, and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

-Joe

Expect Delays By setting up an automatic reply for messages sent to your .Mac address, you can inform senders that you got the message but can't reply immediately.

Step 2: Meet Your New Filing System

Now that you've decreased the stream of incoming messages, the next step is to create a filing system and to automate as much of the process as possible.

Set Up Your Mailboxes

When you originally set up your e-mail program, it probably provided just a single mailbox—your inbox—for all incoming messages (plus others for sent messages, drafts, trash, and junk mail). But when everything is in one mailbox, it's hard to keep track of what you've dealt with and what still needs your attention. So the first step to imposing order is to create additional mailboxes. This will give your mail a place to go besides your inbox.

Some people use dozens of mailboxes, but with rare exceptions that's more trouble than it's worth. Because modern e-mail programs can search hundreds of thousands of messages in seconds, you gain little with such fine-grained organization and you create extra filing work for yourself. What I want you to do, at least as a starting point, is to create exactly *three* new mailboxes: Filed, Action, and Later. (If you already have other mailboxes, leave them where they are, but create these new ones, too.)

Filed is for everything you're finished with but want to keep for reference; Action is for messages that require you to do something with them, such as replying or forwarding, before you can file or delete them; and Later is for low-priority messages you want to look at only when you have free time.

To create a new mailbox in Mail, choose Mailbox: New Mailbox. From the Location pop-up menu, select where the mailbox should reside. If you have an IMAP, .Mac, or Exchange account, select it from this menu to store your mailboxes on the server. This makes them available when you access your account from other computers or with other e-mail programs. Otherwise, select On My Mac to store them locally. Type a name, and click on OK.

FILED
LATER
ACTION
MAIL

In Entourage, select your account in the folder list, choose File: New: Folder, type a name, and click on Create. (To create a mailbox that's stored locally on your Mac, select Folders On My Computer from the folder list and choose File: New: Subfolder.)

Be Quick and Decisive

From now on, your inbox will be just that: a place where incoming messages stay just long enough for you to decide what to do with them. (For the moment, don't worry about the hundreds or thousands of old messages already there—we'll deal with those shortly.)

When you get a message, assuming you're not involved in some other project, immediately do one of the following:

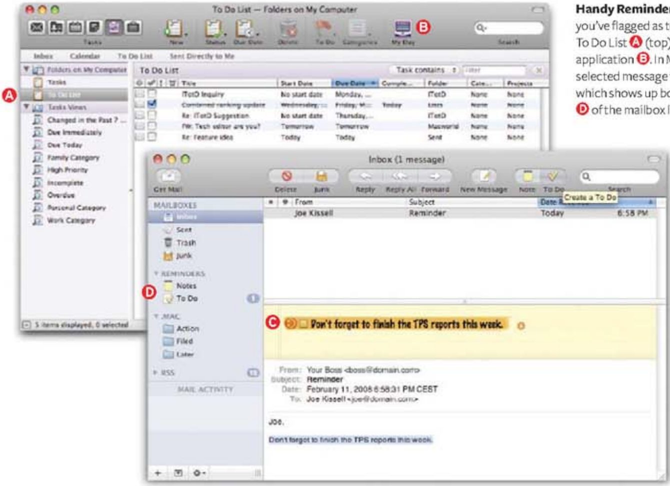
Reply If you can construct and send a suitable reply within a couple of minutes, do so on the spot and then file the original message (into Filed or another appropriate mailbox). If a response may take longer, move the message into your Action mailbox. But keep in mind that not every message requires a reply—not even every message that asks a question. Some people are naturally chatty; however, that doesn't mean they'll be offended if you don't respond to every question in every message.

Create a Task If a message contains an assignment or references some action you must take other than merely replying—write an article, look up information, make an appointment, or whatever—add an item to your to-do list, and then file the message immediately. Your inbox shouldn't serve as a makeshift to-do list, or else you'll guarantee that it's always full of tasks that take days, weeks, or longer to complete.

Using Data Detectors

Are you in the habit of leaving e-mail messages in your inbox because they contain contact information or schedule details that you don't want to lose? Mail 3 includes *data detectors*, which automatically find strings that look like dates, times, and contact information. When you hover the cursor over a date, a pop-up menu appears that lets you turn the e-mail message into an item in your iCal calendar. This even works for nonspecific date-related text such as "Monday morning" or "lunch on the 14th." iCal makes its best guess as to what date and time the text implies; you may have to adjust the event details manually afterward.

Similarly, the pop-up menu that appears when you hover over a name, a physical or e-mail address, or a phone number lets you add a new contact to Address Book—or add information to an existing contact. This feature makes it easier to get the information you need into a more appropriate program.


A
B
C
D
To Do List — Folders on My Computer
New
Status
Due Date
Delete
To Do
Categories
My Day
Search
Inbox
Calendar
To Do List
Sent Directly to Me
Folders on My Computer
Tasks
To Do List
Tasks Views
Changed in the Past 7 ...
Due Immediately
Due Today
Family Category
High Priority
Incomplete
Overdue
Personal Category
Work Category
5 items displayed, 0 selected
Task contains
Inbox (1 message)
Get Mail
Delete
Junk
Reply
Reply All
Forward
New Message
Note
To Do
Create a To Do
MAILBOXES
Inbox
Sent
Trash
Junk
REMINDERS
Notes
To Do
.MAC
Action
Filed
Later
RSS
MAIL ACTIVITY

To Do List

Title	Start Date	Due Date	Comple...	Folder	Cate...	Projects
ITotD Inquiry	No start date	Monday, ...		ITotD	None	None
Combined ranking update	Wednesday, ...	Friday, M...	Today	Lists	None	None
Re: ITotD Suggestion	No start date	Thursday, ...		ITotD	None	None
FW: Tech editor are you?	Tomorrow	Tomorrow		Macworld	None	None
Re: Feature idea	Today	Today		Sent	None	None

From	Subject	Date Received	
Joe Kissell	Reminder	Today	6:58 PM

☐ Don't forget to finish the TPS reports this week.

From: Your Boss <boss@domain.com>
Subject: Reminder
Date: February 11, 2008 6:58:31 PM CEST
To: Joe Kissell <joe@domain.com>

Joe,

Don't forget to finish the TPS reports this week.

Handy Reminders In Entourage, messages you've flagged as to-do items show up in your To Do List Ⓐ (top) as well as in the My Day application Ⓑ. In Mail (bottom), you can turn selected message text into a to-do item Ⓒ, which shows up both in the Reminders section Ⓓ of the mailbox list and in iCal.

Entourage, Mail 3, and iCal—as well as third-party programs such as MOApp's $5 meinKopp (macworld.com/3511) and Cultured Code's $49 Things (macworld.com/3512)—include capable task managers that help you stay on top of deadlines and errands.

In Mail 3, you can create a to-do item out of any message by simply highlighting some text that represents the task and clicking on the To Do button in the toolbar. A yellow header appears at the top of the message with your task highlighted (see "Handy Reminders"). From here you can edit the text, or click on the arrow to the left of the new task to set a priority, due date, or alarm. Mail also adds the new task to its To Do list, which you'll find under Reminders in the Mailboxes pane; the task appears in iCal as well. (For more advice on managing your to-do lists in Mail, see this month's *Working Mac,* on page 74.)

Once you've created a to-do item, move the original message to the Filed mailbox in case you need it for future reference. Later you can quickly locate a task's associated e-mail message by switching to your To Do list and clicking on the gray arrow icon to the right of the task's title.

To create to-do items from messages in Entourage 2008, select a message and choose a due date from the To Do pop-up menu on the toolbar. You can also set an alarm by choosing Add Reminder from the same menu. When you're done, move the message to your Filed mailbox. Now, when you click on the Tasks button in the toolbar, you'll see the message under the To Do List header; in Entourage 2008, to-do items also appear in the My Day application.

Entourage 2004 doesn't offer a To-Do menu, but you can get similar results by selecting a message and choosing Flag For Follow-Up from the toolbar's Flag pop-up menu, and then setting a due date and alarm in the resulting dialog box.

Mark It for Action If the message requires a reply (without involving any separate task), but you don't have time to deal with it right this minute, move it to your Action mailbox. The point of the Action mailbox isn't merely to keep your inbox empty, but to give you a place to focus your attention on those messages that genuinely require more attention than you can give in a few minutes. So be sure to check your Action mailbox at least twice a day, and move messages out of it (into Filed or the trash) once you've dealt with them. Make it your goal to keep this mailbox as close to empty as possible. Under no circumstances should you let any message sit there for more than a week.

Save It for Later Not every message is a top priority. For messages that you may want to look at, but don't really need to spend time on now, use the Later mailbox. When you have some free time, go through your Later mailbox and delete or file those messages as appropriate.

By the way, your e-mail program can weed out some of these types of messages—such as marketing messages and jokes from your relatives—with the help of mail rules (see "Rules for a Cleaner Inbox").

Forward Some messages require another person's action. If you receive a party invitation and need to find out whether your wife is interested before you reply, forward her the message and then file the original until you receive her response. If you're concerned that the person to whom you've forwarded a message might not get back to you and you'll forget about it, still file the message, but either put it in your Action mailbox or flag it so it appears in your to-do list. In any case, get it out of your inbox.

Delete Sometimes it's evident immediately that you'll never need to look at a message again after reading it once. In these cases, I recommend deleting the message right away. If you keep it around, you'll waste time by forcing yourself to reread it later.

Rules for a Cleaner Inbox

Your e-mail client can reduce the amount of work you have to do when new messages arrive by processing some of them for you. E-mail programs like Mail and Entourage let you create rules that look for certain characteristics in incoming e-mail and then take an action—such as moving it to a certain mailbox, deleting it, or sending out a canned reply—when a message matches the criteria. Although rules can't deal with all your incoming messages, they can go a long way toward keeping your inbox free for personal correspondence and helping you identify especially important messages.

Rules 101

Rules consist of two parts: the first is the condition, which is the attribute the rule looks for, and the other is the action, which is what the rule does if a message matches the condition. Rules can have multiple conditions and actions to create complex interactions.

To create a new rule in Mail, choose Mail: Preferences, click on the Rules button, and then click on Add Rule. In Entourage, choose Tools: Rules, click on the New button (or, in Entourage 2004, the tiny arrow just to the right of the New button), and then choose the account type for which you're creating a rule from the pop-up menu. Then, no matter which program you're using, fill in a name for the rule, select one or more conditions and actions, and click on OK.

Three to Try

In general, I suggest using rules to move nonessential messages into your Later mailbox while leaving them marked as unread, so you'll know which messages you haven't yet seen. You'll have to decide what counts as nonessential, but for me, that would include anything sent by an automated system rather than a human being—notifications from banks, utilities, airlines, stores, and the like; messages from a mailing list; and any other frequently received messages that follow a pattern you can summarize with a rule.

Here are some suggestions for helpful rules. Adjust the conditions to fit your own needs.

Low-Priority Notices Notifications of online bank statements, mailings from merchants, newsletters from your alumni association, and other such messages can all go into your Later mailbox for perusal when you have free time. In most cases, you can simply create a rule that looks for the sender (consult the last such message you received to get the e-mail address).

Set up the new rule with the condition From Contains *address@example.com*. Then, in Mail, set the action to read Move Message To Mailbox Later; in Entourage, set it to Move Message Later. Each time you get a similar type of e-mail, you can add a new condition to the rule that includes the new recipient—or, if you prefer, create an entirely new rule.

Not-So-Funny Forwards Just about everyone has a friend or relative who loves to forward jokes, funny pictures, and chain letters to everyone in his or her address book. Although such people are undoubtedly well intentioned, these sorts of messages can wreak havoc with an otherwise clean inbox. Personally, I think honesty is the best policy. If you think your friend or relative will be understanding, send a polite, thoughtful, and perhaps self-effacing message explaining that you really do enjoy hearing from them, but you need to limit nonessential e-mail for the sake of your sanity. If you don't have the heart to ask him or her to stop, set up a rule that looks for that person's e-mail address and a subject beginning with Fwd, and then moves such messages into your Later mailbox.

Because the rule will have multiple conditions, you'll first need to specify that all conditions must be met in order for the rule to take action. In Mail, choose All from the Any/All pop-up menu. In Entourage, click on the Execute pop-up menu and choose If All Criteria Are Met. Now create two conditions that read more or less as follows (the phrasing will vary slightly in Entourage):

`From Contains offending_address@example.com`
`Subject Begins With Fwd`

And create this action:

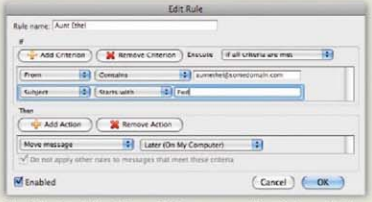
`Move Message To Mailbox Later`

Autoreplies If your e-mail provider doesn't offer a server-based out-of-office feature, you can set up a rule that does something similar by sending an automatic reply to each incoming message. But be careful: this rule really will reply to *all* messages, which may result in some people getting multiple copies of your autoreply.

In Mail, set the first condition to Every Message and the action to Reply To Message. In Entourage, set the condition to All Messages and the action to Reply. Enter the text of your autoreply, and click on OK.

Right now this rule may also reply to spam, which you probably don't want. To avoid this in Mail 3, choose Mail: Preferences, go to the Junk Mail pane, and select Filter Junk Mail Before Applying My Rules. In Entourage, you can handle this with an extra condition: Junk Mail Likelihood Is Low.

To turn off the autoreply, either delete the rule or deselect it in your Rules list.



Edit Rule

Rule name: Aunt Ethel

If

Execute: If all criteria are met

From Contains auntethel@somedomain.com

Subject Starts with Fwd

Then

Move message Later (On My Computer)

✓ Do not apply other rules to messages that meet these criteria

☑ Enabled

No Joke A rule like this one in Entourage can direct jokes and other random forwards from your relatives into a mailbox that you'll check only when you have extra time.

Step 3: Clean Out Your Inbox

So far, you've reduced the volume of incoming mail, created a filing system, and started using a simple process to deal with the new messages you receive. But what about all those messages still in your inbox? It's time to take care of them now.

Apply the Rules

If you've set up rules to process incoming mail, you can apply those same rules to the existing messages in your inbox. You may be surprised at how many old messages those rules will file away for you in a flash. First, go to your inbox and choose Edit: Select All. Then, in Mail, choose Message: Apply Rules. In Entourage, choose Message: Apply Rules: All Rules.

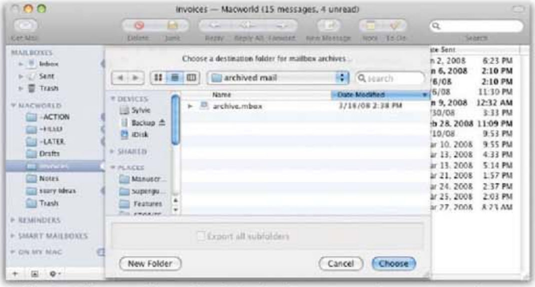
Deal with the Backlog

Of the remaining messages, the older ones are less likely to require your active attention than the newer ones. Click on the Date Received or Date Sent column in your inbox to sort the messages by date, and skim over them beginning with the oldest ones. But be realistic. If a message has been in your inbox for more than a month without a response from you, the sender has probably forgotten about it. You can save yourself some time by moving all of these ancient e-mails into Filed (deleting truly unnecessary messages along the way).

For more recent e-mails, briefly consider each message and do one of three things: delete it, move it into Filed, or move it into Action—and along the way, add any necessary tasks to your to-do list. (You'll notice that I deliberately left the Later mailbox off the list—these messages have been in your inbox for a while. It's time to be decisive—file, reply, or delete.)

I want to reiterate that the intention here is not simply to move the problem (unprocessed e-mail) from one mailbox to another. The point is to be practical about how much time and attention you have to give. Filed will be the default destination of most messages; only the most crucial ones will turn into to-do items or move into Action for a reply.

Although you should spend no longer than a minute or two on any single message, that time can still add up. So feel free to do this pruning in batches—an hour or two per day—until you're down to an empty inbox.



Archive It Mail lets you archive a mailbox in the .mbox format to get ancient messages out of your way.

Take Action

When you're done cleaning out your inbox, you may have moved quite a few messages into the Action mailbox. Don't feel overwhelmed. Scan it daily; make it your goal to have fewer messages in your Action mailbox at the end of each day than at the beginning.

Send Messages to Cold Storage

Even when your older messages are safely out of your inbox, they'll still show up in searches and in your secondary mailboxes. Merely having those messages there can be distracting, and in some cases they can make it harder for you to find the more recent (and more relevant) messages you may be looking for.

Get Inspired

I am not the first person to realize the importance of keeping your inbox empty or to generate suggestions for making that dream a reality. I've benefited from the helpful advice of numerous productivity gurus. If you want further advice, consider consulting the masters.

43 Folders Merlin Mann provides numerous suggestions on emptying your inbox—and keeping it empty—in his Inbox Zero series of articles on the 43 Folders Web site (www.43folders.com/izero). Read these, along with the reader-supplied comments, for further inspiration.

GTD David Allen's Getting Things Done method isn't just for e-mail; it's a complete plan for managing all the tasks in your work and personal life without becoming overwhelmed. To learn more about this system, visit www.gettingthingsdone.com.

Your email program does not have one of these:

Ours does.

Imagine an email program that was smart enough to observe and learn how you handle your email. Like offering to reply to certain types of email messages using a response you've previously sent. Or giving you the option to auto-file a message you've read based on how you've filed similar messages in the past. What if you could defer a message from your inbox for a few days or weeks, so that it magically reappears later when you're ready to deal with it? What if this program had an amazing junk mail filter that would leave your inbox devoid of spam? What if this program was as familiar and easy to use as Apple Mail?

After three years in development, we've finally created that program. Outspring Mail is the newest email client for Macintosh. We've taken the best features of existing email programs and coupled them with our patent-pending intelligent functions to create a program that will make your email chores far easier. And since this is a current-generation application, it supports major email protocols including POP, IMAP, SMTP and SSL. It also runs natively on the latest Macintosh computers and OS X Leopard. But don't just take our word for it. Check out the details at www.outspring.com.

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Stay Organized in Gmail

You don't have to use a desktop e-mail program to stay organized. Fans of Google's free Gmail service can access powerful e-mail management features right from its Web interface—so you can admire your tidy inbox from any computer on the Internet. (For more Gmail tips, go to macworld.com/3515.)

Use Labels

Gmail doesn't use conventional mail folders to separate categories of e-mail. Instead, it offers *labels*. These tags function like folders, with one fabulous difference: a single message can have multiple labels, so there's no limit to how many places you can file your messages. To assign a label to a selected message, click on the More Actions drop-down menu. For example, you might create an Action label for messages that require further attention and a Later label for less important messages.

You can create new labels by clicking on Settings and selecting the Labels tab. You can also color-code your labels to make it easier to identify labeled messages. From the Labels box in the left pane, click on the clear box to the right of a label's name and select a color from the resulting pop-up menu (see "Labeled").

Archive It

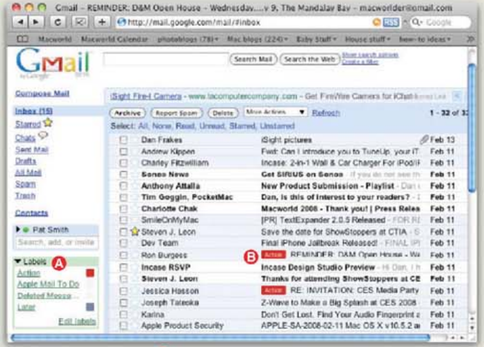
Once you've dealt with an e-mail message, get it out of your inbox by archiving it. This is analogous to placing your messages in a Filed mailbox. Select the message and click on the Archive button. This moves it into the All Mail list.

Filter It

Just like Mail and Entourage, Gmail can automatically process incoming messages based on specific characteristics. In Gmail's Settings screen, click on Filters to set the search criteria, preview the results, and configure what action Gmail should take. Or jump-start the process by first opening an example of the type of messages you want to filter, clicking on the Reply drop-down menu in the message's right corner, and then selecting Filter Messages Like This.

Search Smart

Need to quickly call up a message from your enormous archive? Spend a little time mastering Gmail's search tool. For example, to find messages from Jim that discuss his favorite movies, type `from:Jim subject:movie` into the search box. Or use `from:"John Smith" has:attachment` to locate that PDF map John sent a while back. See Gmail's full list of search operators at macworld.com/3514.—GINA TRAPANI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http://mail.google.com/mail/#inbox
Google
Macworld
Macworld Calendar
photoblogs (78)
Mac blogs (224)
Baby Stuff
House stuff
how-to ideas
Gmail
Search Mail
Search the Web
Compose Mail
Inbox (15)
Starred
Chats
Sent Mail
Drafts
All Mail
Spam
Trash
Contacts
Pat Smith
Search, add, or invite
Labels
A
Action
Apple Mail To Do
Deleted Messa...
Later
Edit labels
iSight Fire-i Camera - www.iacomputercompany.com - Get FireWire Camera for iChat
Archive
Report Spam
Delete
More Actions
Refresh
1 - 32 of 3
Select: All, None, Read, Unread, Starred, Unstarred
B

Dan Frakes	iSight pictures	Feb 13
Andrew Kippen	Fwd: Can I introduce you to TuneUp, your iT	Feb 11
Charley Fitzwilliam	Incase: 2-in-1 Wall & Car Charger For iPod/i	Feb 11
Sonos News	**Get SIRIUS on Sonos**	**Feb 11**
Anthony Attalla	**New Product Submission - Playlist**	**Feb 11**
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Charlotte Chak	**Macworld 2008 - Thank you! | Press Relea**	**Feb 11**
SmileOnMyMac	[PR] TextExpander 2.0.5 Released	Feb 11
Steven J. Leon	Save the date for ShowStoppers at CTIA	Feb 11
Dev Team	Final iPhone Jailbreak Released!	Feb 11
Ron Burgess	Action REMINDER: D&M Open House - We	Feb 11
Incase RSVP	**Incase Design Studio Preview**	**Feb 11**
Steven J. Leon	**Thanks for attending ShowStoppers at CE**	**Feb 11**
Jessica Hasson	Action RE: INVITATION: CES Media Party	Feb 11
Joseph Tateoka	Z-Wave to Make a Big Splash at CES 2008	Feb 11
Karina	Don't Get Lost. Find Your Audio Fingerprint a	Feb 11
Apple Product Security	APPLE-SA-2008-02-11 Mac OS X v10.5.2 a	Feb 11

Labeled Use the Labels box Ⓐ to quickly see the messages associated with each label. Add a color to the label to make labeled messages Ⓑ easier to spot in a list.

To clear old messages out of your way, try archiving them in such a way that you can still retrieve them if necessary.

In Mail 3, you create an archive by selecting one or more mailboxes and choosing Mailbox: Archive Mailbox. In the dialog box that appears, navigate to the folder where you want to store the archived messages, and then click on Choose (see "Archive It"). Mail stores archived mailboxes in the .mbox format. Entourage doesn't have an Archive command, but you can drag any mailbox to your desktop (or to another folder in the Finder) to export it in the .mbox format. After archiving a mailbox, you can delete it (or at least the messages it contains).

You can't do much with .mbox files directly (but you can open them in a text editor if necessary). If you need to access the messages in an archive, you must reimport them into Mail or Entourage.

In Mail, go to File: Import Mailboxes, select Mbox Files, navigate to the folder containing the .mbox file, and click on Choose. Select the mailboxes you want to import and click on Continue. If you use Entourage, choose File: Import, select Contacts Or Messages From A Text File, and click on the right arrow. In the next dialog box, select Import Messages From An MBOX-Format Text File, and click on the right arrow. Navigate to the .mbox file, and click on Finish when you're done.

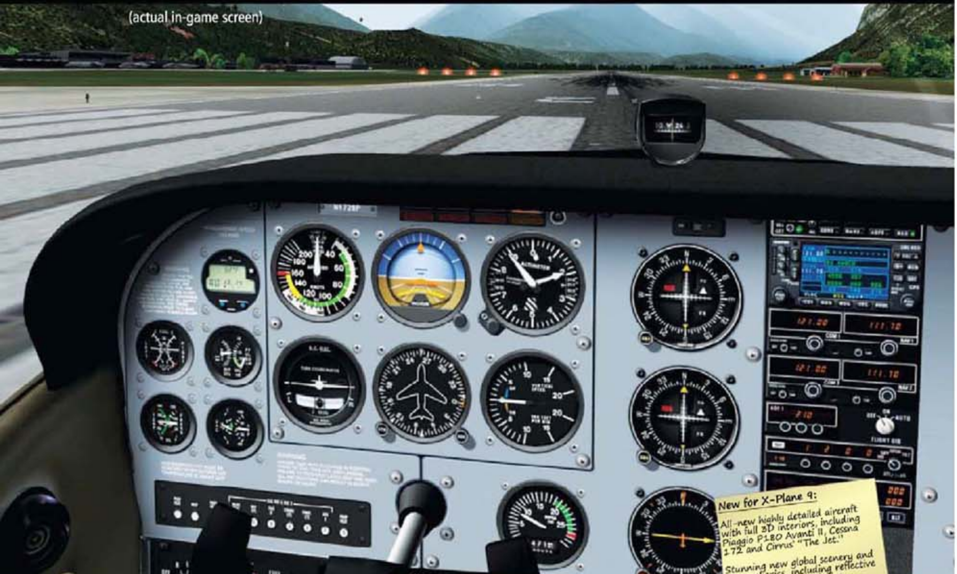
An even better option is to use a stand-alone e-mail archiving program such as Jon Seward's $50 MailSteward (www.mailsteward.com) to store and access your old messages. MailSteward can import .mbox files from any e-mail client, or can import messages from Mail without requiring that you archive them first. Within MailSteward, you can search your archives, and print or even reply to archived messages.

Final Thoughts

Getting your inbox to a perpetually empty state may take time. You may not succeed immediately, and you may find that after a while you slip back into old habits. But it's never too late to go back and follow these steps again. ☒

Joe Kissell is the senior editor of TidBits (www.tidbits.com) and the author of numerous e-books about Mac OS X (www.takecontrolbooks.com).

REALISM TO THE 9th DEGREE


(actual in-game screen)

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Secrets

Working Mac

Master Mail's Reminders

Make sense of notes and to-do items in Leopard Mail **BY JOE KISSELL**

If you rely heavily on e-mail to keep track of your projects and responsibilities, then you'll appreciate Mail's new ability to create notes that hold important snippets of information. The Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard) version of Apple's e-mail client also lets you create to-do items that stand on their own or are associated with an e-mail message or a note—without opening Apple's iCal.

Unfortunately, Mail doesn't make it obvious where it has stored your data or how to put that information where you want it to go. The result can be a proliferation of calendars and mailboxes that increases clutter rather than simplifying your life. But you can untwist this tangle, making notes and to-do items work as you need them to.

RE-MEMBER
DO!
2008
1
2
3

ILLUSTRATION BY KEVIN O'KEEFE

Never Forget with Notes

Mail's notes are containers for almost any kind of information—plain or styled text, graphics, and more. (In fact, you can attach any file to a note, just as you can attach a file to an e-mail message.) Mail stores notes, along with your messages, in your inbox or another mailbox. Think of them as replacements for physical or electronic sticky notes—they give you a convenient place to put reminders and random pieces of information such as shopping lists or thoughts during a phone conversation.

Create a Note To create a new note, click on the Note button in Mail's toolbar, choose File: New Note, or press ⌘-control-N. Type, paste, or drag text or files into the window that appears (see "Quick Reference"). Use the Fonts and Colors buttons in the toolbar to change the style of text in your notes. When you close a note window, Mail saves the note automatically. The note's subject is its first line. (Sorry, you can't rename a note without changing its first line—and if a graphic is the very first thing in the note, it won't have any subject.)

Make a List It's not an obvious feature, but notes can include automatically bulleted or numbered lists. Go to Format: Lists to apply list styles or, if you're going to use lists a lot, control-click (or right-click) on the toolbar of a note window and choose Customize Toolbar from the contextual menu. Then drag the Lists icon to the toolbar and click on Done. Now you can use the Lists pop-up menu to format your text.

Find Your Notes Mail displays all your notes under Notes in the Reminders section of its sidebar. Reminders functions something like a smart mailbox, showing all notes regardless of their actual location. If you have more than one e-mail account set up in Mail, by default the note actually goes into the inbox or Notes mailbox of whichever account you viewed most recently. This can lead to unpredictable behavior, because you might not always know which account Mail considers to be the currently active one. You can force Mail to always store notes in a single IMAP, .Mac, or Exchange account instead. Choose Mail: Preferences, click on the Composing button in the toolbar, and choose the account you want to use from the Create Notes & To Do's In pop-up menu. Or choose On My Mac to store all your notes in a local Notes mailbox.

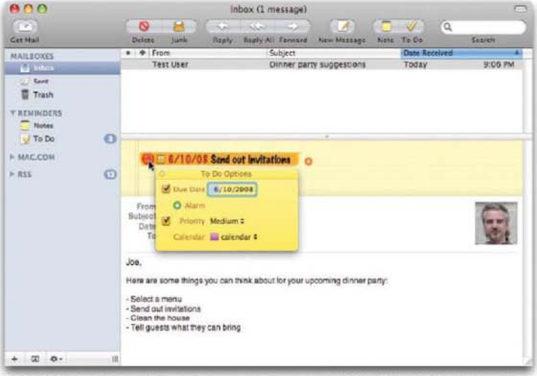
Keep Notes Out of Your Inbox When notes appear in your inbox (as they do by default if the mailbox you viewed most recently belongs to an IMAP, .Mac, or Exchange account), you're unlikely to lose track of them. But the downside is that they may clutter up the inbox, which many people try to keep as empty as possible (a practice I recommend; for details, see "Empty Your Inbox," page 64).

If you would prefer to store notes in a Notes mailbox so that they appear *only* in the Notes section of Mail's sidebar, choose Mail: Preferences and click on the Accounts icon in the toolbar. In the list on the left, select the account in which your notes are stored. Click on Mailbox Behaviors, and deselect the Store Notes In Inbox option. Changing this option doesn't move notes already stored in your inbox, however. To move them, select the inbox and then drag each note onto the Notes icon in Mail's sidebar.

See Notes If your notes are stored on an IMAP, .Mac, or Exchange server, you can see (but not edit) them on any computer that can connect to that account—even through a different e-mail program or a Web-based interface. This is convenient if you switch computers frequently, especially if the other computer isn't a Mac or doesn't have Mail configured for your e-mail accounts.

However, if you've chosen *not* to store notes in your inbox (as I just described), you may need to explicitly subscribe to the Notes mailbox before you can see it from elsewhere. Some e-mail programs require a special procedure to subscribe to new mailboxes. For example, to do this in Microsoft Entourage on a work computer, select your e-mail account in the Entourage sidebar. Then control-click or right-click on the Notes mailbox in the list on the right and choose Subscribe from the contextual menu.

Mail a Note Mail can e-mail the contents of a note without requiring that you copy and paste it into a message. This can be handy, for example, if you want to share notes from a meeting or send your spouse a shopping list. To send someone a note you've created, select it and then click on the Send button in the toolbar. Mail creates a new message with the contents of your note; you can then edit and address this just as you would any other message.



From	Subject	Date Received	
Test User	Dinner party suggestions	Today	9:06 PM

☐ 6/10/08 Send out invitations

☑ Due Date 6/10/2008

○ Alarm

☑ Priority Medium

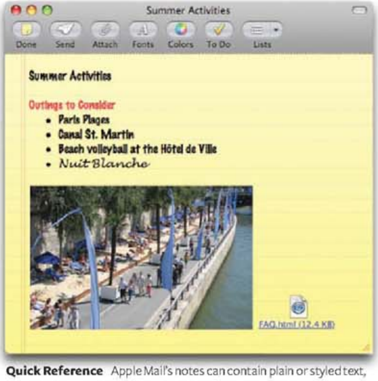
Calendar calendar

Joe,

Here are some things you can think about for your upcoming dinner party:

- Select a menu
- Send out invitations
- Clean the house
- Tell guests what they can bring

Task Options Add a to-do item to a note or e-mail message, and Mail indicates it with a telltale arrow and check box. Click on the arrow to display a pop-up window where you can specify additional options.



Summer Activities

Outings to Consider

- Paris Plages
- Canal St. Martin
- Beach volleyball at the Hôtel de Ville
- Nuit Blanche

Quick Reference Apple Mail's notes can contain plain or styled text, graphics, lists, and other files you drag in from the Finder.

Keep on Track with To-Dos

To-do items in Mail are exactly the same as to-dos in iCal—they remind you about tasks you have to complete and let you include due dates, priorities, and alarms. The advantage of creating your to-dos in Mail is that you can easily do so based on information in your e-mail messages and notes—without having to launch iCal.

Still, Mail and iCal use the same to-do information. In fact, Mail stores its to-do data within iCal's calendars, which makes things very simple if you use only POP e-mail accounts. In that case, Mail will simply share your existing On My Mac iCal calendars, and you'll see the same thing in Mail and iCal, no matter where you create your to-do items. If you use IMAP, .Mac, or Exchange e-mail accounts, however, to-do items you create in iCal may not show up in Mail—and you can't always put to-do items in the calendar of your choice (see "Sort Out To-Dos from the Start" for help).

Create a To-Do Item Create a new to-do in Mail by clicking on the To Do button in the toolbar, choosing File: New To Do, or pressing ⌘-option-Y. What happens next depends on where you are in Mail when you do this. If you're looking at your message list, Mail creates a stand-alone to-do item, which appears in the sidebar in the To Do section under Reminders (see "To-Do List"). Mail never displays to-do items in your inbox, as it sometimes does with notes.

If you have text selected in an e-mail message when you click on the To Do button, Mail shows a to-do item, consisting of the selected text, at the top of the message window; it also lists the item in the To Do section under Reminders. Likewise, if your insertion point is in a note, Mail turns that line of the note into a to-do item (the text you've selected will appear highlighted, with a telltale to-do check box next to it). You can easily rename to-do items, unlike notes. Double-click on a to-do item's title in the To Do list to edit it.

Deal with Deadlines Most of us need a little nudge to keep on track with our to-dos. Mail lets you select due dates, priorities, and alarms for each to-do item. You can set these options from within whatever view you're using to look at the item. To specify options for a to-do item you've created within a note or message, click on the arrow icon to the left of the item's text. In the window that appears, you can select a due date, a priority, and an iCal calendar (see "Task Options"). If you're setting a due date, you can also opt to have one or more alarms by clicking on the plus-sign (+) icon that appears. You can set the same options if you're looking at your tasks in the master To Do list under Reminders. Either control-click on an item to see your options in the contextual menu or simply click on the pop-up menu under each header—for example, Due Date—to set it.

Delete To-Do Items Be careful: if you delete a to-do item (from within either Mail or iCal), it disappears immediately. It doesn't move to the Trash, and you can choose Edit: Undo only if you see your mistake right away. If you created the to-do item within an e-mail message, you can delete either the message or the to-do item individually without affecting the other component. However, if you delete a to-do item created within a note, that line disappears from the note, too. If you delete a note, you delete any and all to-do items created within it.

Undo To-Dos If you have created a to-do item within a note, preserve the text while removing the to-do item itself. Place your insertion point within the text and click on the To Do button in the toolbar. The to-do check box, highlighting, and red arrow in a circle will all go away, but the text will remain.

Sort Out To-Dos from the Start

After creating to-do items in Mail, do you suddenly have a bunch of extra calendars in iCal? In Mail, are you unable to select the iCal calendar where you want to put your to-do items? These problems typically arise when you have one or more IMAP, .Mac, or Exchange accounts, because these accounts complicate the logic Mail uses when choosing where to store to-do items.

The easiest way to eliminate this muddle is to select your e-mail server as the destination for both your notes and your to-do items rather than storing them locally, as is the default. Then move any existing iCal items—including events and to-do items—to a new, server-based calendar.

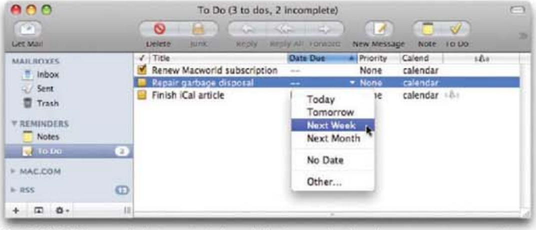
To begin, select Mail: Preferences, click on Composing, and use the Create Notes & To Do's In pop-up menu to select the IMAP, .Mac, or Exchange account where you'd like to store your to-do items and notes. Once you've selected an account, make a new to-do item (it can be a blank one) to force Mail to create a new calendar, initially called calendar, on the server. (In iCal, you can rename this calendar, delete it, or add new calendars in the same location.) Your to-do items, as well as all your other iCal events, are stored both in that iCal calendar and in a special, hidden mailbox on the mail account's server, called Apple Mail To Do. As with the Notes mailbox, this setup ensures seamless syncing of to-do items between Macs even if you don't use .Mac Sync.

Now open iCal. Select the new calendar, which will appear under your e-mail account name in the sidebar, and rename it so that its name matches one of your On My Mac calendars (such as Home). Select the original On My Mac calendar and choose File: Export. Navigate to a convenient location (such as the desktop) and click on Export. Choose File: Import, select Import An iCal File, and click on Import. Select the file you just exported and click on Import again. In the Add Events dialog box that appears, choose the newly created, server-based calendar from the pop-up menu (calendars are listed by account, with account names in gray). Click on OK.

Mail adds all your exported calendar items (including to-do items) to the new calendar. You can then delete the old On My Mac calendar.

Access To-Do Items To-do items in local (On My Mac) calendars don't sync automatically between Macs. But if you're a .Mac subscriber, you can synchronize calendars through .Mac Sync. Open the .Mac preference pane and click on the Sync tab. Select the Synchronize With .Mac option and choose Calendars.

If you use IMAP or Exchange e-mail accounts, Mail can store your to-do items on the server in a special mailbox—invisible in Mail—called Apple Mail To Do (see "Sort Out To-Dos from the Start" for details). To subscribe to this mailbox from an e-mail client other than Mail—Entourage, for example—first select the e-mail account in the Entourage sidebar. Then control-click or right-click on the Apple Mail To Do mailbox in the list on the right, and choose Subscribe from the contextual menu. Note that you'll only see the text of your to-do items—you can't modify them or use the alarms.

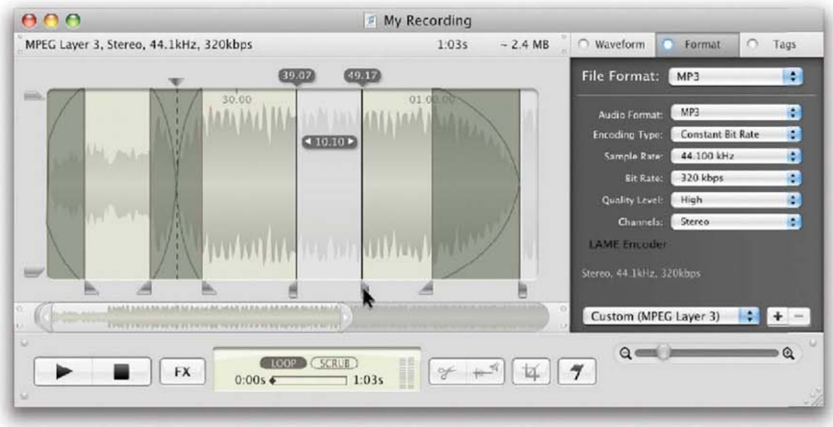


To Do (3 to dos, 2 incomplete)

✓	Title	Date Due	Priority	Calend
☑	Renew Macworld subscription	--	None	calendar
☐	Repair garbage disposal	--	None	calendar
☐	Finish iCal article		e	calendar

To-Do List When you look at your to-do items in list view, each column has a pop-up menu or other control with which you can quickly specify options for the item.

Joe Kissell is the senior editor of TidBits and the author of *Take Control of Apple Mail in Leopard* (Take Control Books, 2008; www.takecontrolbooks.com).



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My Recording

MPEG Layer 3, Stereo, 44.1kHz, 320kbps 1:03s ~ 2.4 MB

○ Waveform ● Format ○ Tags

File Format: MP3

Audio Format: MP3
Encoding Type: Constant Bit Rate
Sample Rate: 44.100 kHz
Bit Rate: 320 kbps
Quality Level: High
Channels: Stereo

LAME Encoder

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Manage Your iTunes Library

Keep your media files organized the right way **BY KIRK MCELHEARN**

You probably have a lot of stuff in your iTunes library. Music, movies, TV shows, podcasts, and audiobooks can easily add up to thousands of files. iTunes is both a media player and a database, and it's the latter feature that helps you organize all these files. No matter where the items reside, you can see information about them in a clear, easy-to-use interface. You can then choose what to listen to, watch, or copy to an iPod, iPhone, or Apple TV.

The way you manage these files can make a big difference in how easy it is to find them, back them up, and keep track of them. So read on to find out what file-management method best suits you, and how to save time by letting iTunes keep tabs on all your files.

ILLUSTRATION BY ROMAN KLONEK

Where Your Files Live

The first time you launch iTunes, it creates an iTunes Music folder and places it in *your user folder*/Music/iTunes). iTunes' default setting is to download purchased files and copy all imported media files to that folder. It will also keep files organized by artist and album. These settings guarantee that you can find all your media files easily (for this to work optimally, however, you need to tag all your files correctly; see macworld.com/3501 for more on tagging files).

Store New Files Elsewhere

As you add large video files and the like to your iTunes library, your hard drive may get tight on space, and you may want to store some or all your files on an external drive. To put all your future media on an external disk, create an iTunes Music folder on that disk. Then, in the General tab of iTunes' Advanced preferences, find the iTunes Music Folder Location section and click on the Change button. Navigate to the new folder and click on Open, and then on OK. This will tell iTunes to store all your new files in this folder. (Note that this won't move your existing files, but you'll still be able to access them from within iTunes; I'll cover moving your iTunes Music folder shortly.)

To access the new content, of course, you'll need to make sure you connect the external drive before you launch iTunes—otherwise you won't be able to listen to the music or watch the movies you have stored on it.

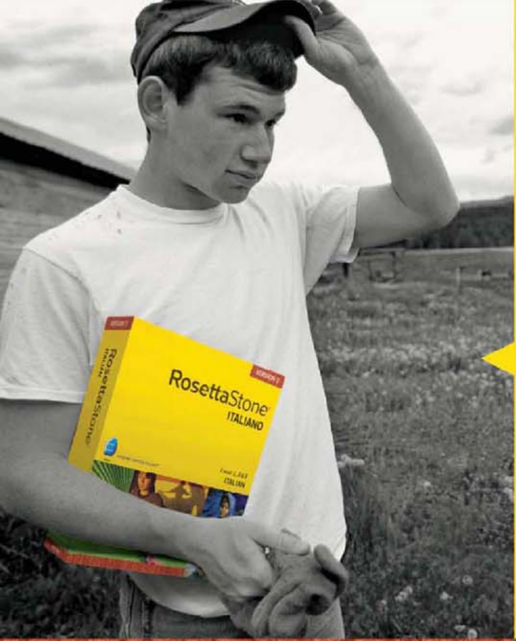
Don't Copy Files

Another option is to change iTunes' settings so it doesn't copy files when you add them to your iTunes library (the program's default), but rather leaves them where they are. Doing so lets you keep some files in your local iTunes Music folder, and others on an external drive, or in another location on your startup volume. To make the change, look just below the iTunes Music Folder Location section in iTunes' Advanced preferences and deselect Copy Files To iTunes Music Folder When Adding To Library (see "iTunes Preferences"). Now when you drag files into iTunes, the software will simply add pointers to those files instead of copying them. However, music you rip via iTunes or media you purchase from the iTunes Store will still end up in the standard location (the iTunes Music folder on your Mac).

The downside to this approach is that you'll end up with files scattered in several locations. Sure, you can always control- or right-click on a file from within iTunes and choose Show In Finder to find out where it resides, but leaving the files where they are can still be confusing when you want to back up your music or find files manually.

Consolidate Your Library

If your media files are in several locations, there may come a time when you want to bring them all back into a single folder—either to back them up, or simply to keep them in one place so you don't have to worry about plugging in



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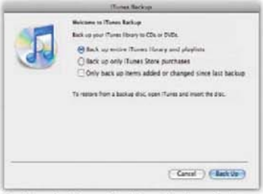
external drives. In fact, if you have the drive space, it makes more sense to centralize all your files, so you always know where to find them. To do so, choose Advanced: Consolidate Library, and iTunes will copy any files that are not in the iTunes Music folder to that location. (This may take a long time if you have a lot of files.) You'll now find all your files in your iTunes Music folder, but iTunes won't delete the originals—the program leaves it up to you to decide their fate.

Move Your Entire Media Folder

For backup purposes especially, you may want all your iTunes files in one place, but not in your Home folder. The best solution is to use an external drive (or an additional internal one, in the case of tower systems) for your iTunes files. Although this may not be practical for a laptop (unless you use it in one location on a desk most of the time), it works very well for a desktop Mac.

To move all current iTunes media files to another drive, first copy your iTunes Music folder to a location of your choice. Then set the iTunes Music folder location to that new folder (as described previously). iTunes will take a while to update your library, depending on its size.

To make sure iTunes sees your new folder location, try to play a file. If instead of the expected sounds or sights, you see an exclamation point next to the file name, that means you need to consolidate your library (as described previously)—sometimes iTunes consolidates correctly the first time, and other times it needs to scour the library a second time to get everything right. After you've done this, you'll be able to play files from your external disk, as long as it's connected and powered before you launch iTunes.



Welcome to iTunes Backup

Back up your iTunes library to CDs or DVDs.

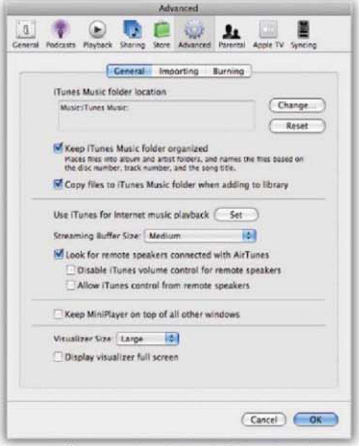
● Back up entire iTunes library and playlists
○ Back up only iTunes Store purchases
☐ Only back up items added or changed since last backup

To restore from a backup disc, open iTunes and insert the disc.

Backup Options The iTunes Backup window walks you through the backup procedure.

If you do have a laptop, you can use the external drive to sync files to an iPod even if you don't want to leave the drive connected all the time. Just sync your iPod, quit iTunes, and eject the external drive.

When you're moving your files from one Mac to another, there are two ways to make sure the process leaves your iTunes library intact. The first is to use Apple's Migration Assistant during installation or setup to copy all files and folders from your previous Mac to the new one. If you want to move the files manually, all you need to do is copy the folder containing your media files (say, your iTunes Music folder), and also copy the other files in the iTunes folder to the iTunes folder in your new Music folder.



iTunes Music folder location
Music:iTunes Music:

☑ Keep iTunes Music folder organized
Places files into album and artist folders, and names the files based on the disc number, track number, and the song title.
☑ Copy files to iTunes Music folder when adding to library

Use iTunes for Internet music playback

Streaming Buffer Size: Medium

☑ Look for remote speakers connected with AirTunes
  ☐ Disable iTunes volume control for remote speakers
  ☐ Allow iTunes control from remote speakers

☐ Keep MiniPlayer on top of all other windows

Visualizer Size: Large
☐ Display visualizer full screen

iTunes Preferences The various Music folder settings tell iTunes how to manage your media files.

Back Up Your Media Files

If your hard drive crashes, you're in trouble. You'll lose files purchased from the iTunes Store, but also all the files you so carefully ripped from CDs and DVDs—the files you spent a lot of time tagging, adding album art to, and maybe adding lyrics to. Backing up these files means that if you have a problem, you can restore them in minutes instead of the days or weeks it would take to rip them all again (and you won't have to repurchase your iTunes Store files, either).

There are many ways to back up your media files. Leopard's Time Machine feature can back up all your media files automatically. iTunes also has a built-in method for backing up files, which you can access by choosing File: Back Up To Disc. Select it and you'll see an iTunes Backup window offering to back up your entire library and its playlists, your purchased media files only, or just the items that have changed since you last backed them up (see "Backup Options"). (iTunes remembers which files you have added or changed, so if you have performed an initial, full backup, each subsequent backup copies only new files. This helps the backup process go much faster and take up much less room than backing up everything each time.)

When you click on the Back Up button, iTunes asks you to insert an optical disc, and then burns the files. When it fills up one disc, it will ask for another, and so on, until the backup is finished (DVDs work much better for this than CDs, as each DVD disc can hold more than six times as much data).

Since iTunes burns your files in a standard Finder format, you can just load a disc and copy its files without any special software. If you need to restore your entire library from optical backups, however, insert the first disc of your backup, and then follow the instructions in the dialog box that appears; iTunes can restore all your files and playlists, good as new. ☒

Kirk McElhearn writes about Macs, iPods, books, music, and more on his blog, Kirkville (www.mcelhearn.com).

LEGAL NOTICE

If You Purchased a Replacement Power Adapter for Certain Apple PowerBook or iBook Computers, You Could Be Entitled to Benefits From a Class Action Settlement.

A settlement of a class action lawsuit affects you if you purchased an Apple PowerBook or iBook computer listed on Exhibit 1 hereto ("Subject Computer") and subsequently purchased a Replacement Adapter for the Subject Computer due to failure of the Adapter included with or sold for the Subject Computer. The settlement will provide a cash payment to United States residents who purchased a Subject Computer and paid for a Replacement Adapter covered by the settlement within the first three years following the initial retail purchase of the Subject Computer. If you qualify, you may send in a claim form to ask for payment, or you can exclude yourself from the settlement, or object. The United States District Court for the Northern District of California authorized this notice. The Court will have a hearing to consider whether to approve the settlement, so that the benefits may be paid.

WHO'S AFFECTED?

Purchasers of an Apple PowerBook or iBook computer listed on Exhibit 1 hereto. You're a "Class Member" if you are a United States resident who purchased in the United States an Apple PowerBook or iBook computer listed on Exhibit 1 for your own use and not for resale.

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

The lawsuit claimed that the Adapter included with or sold for the Subject Computers is defective in that it allegedly "dangerously frays, sparks and prematurely fails to work." Apple denies all allegations and has asserted many defenses. Apple is entering into this settlement to avoid burdensome and costly litigation. The settlement is not an admission of wrongdoing.

WHAT CAN YOU GET FROM THE SETTLEMENT?

Apple has agreed to provide a cash payment to Class Members who purchased a Replacement Adapter due to the failure of the Adapter included with or sold for a Subject Computer covered by the settlement and who send in a valid claim form. For failures within the first year following the initial retail purchase of the Subject Computer, the settlement requires that you attempted to have the failed Adapter replaced or repaired under warranty by Apple and such request was denied by Apple for a reason other than user abuse.

The settlement provides for different cash payments depending on when the Adapter included with or sold for your Subject Computer failed.

The settlement only applies to a Replacement Adapter purchased during the first three years following the initial retail purchase of the Subject Computer, and before May 31, 2009. Cash payment amounts are as follows:

YEAR OF FAILURE OF ADAPTER	CASH PAYMENT AMOUNT
YEAR 1	THE ACTUAL AMOUNT PAID FOR THE REPLACEMENT ADAPTER (EXCLUDING TAX & SHIPPING) UP TO $79
YEAR 2	$40
YEAR 3	$25

There is a limit of one cash payment per Subject Computer.

HOW DO YOU GET A PAYMENT?

A detailed notice and claim form package contains everything you need. Just call 1-888-539-5706 or go to www.rosenthalco.com/gordonvapple to get one.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

If you purchased a Replacement Adapter as described herein on or before June 10, 2008, you must mail the claim form **postmarked on or before October 8, 2008**. If you purchased a Replacement Adapter as described herein after June 10, 2008, you must mail the claim form postmarked on or before the ***earlier*** of **120 days after the date the Adapter failure occurred, or by May 31, 2009**.

WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

If you don't want a payment and you don't want to be legally bound by the settlement, **you must postmark your request to exclude yourself by July 25, 2008**, or you won't be able to sue, or continue to sue, Apple about the legal claims in this case. If you exclude yourself, you can't get a payment from this settlement. If you stay in the Class, you may object to the settlement. **Objections must be received by July 25, 2008.** The detailed notice describes how to exclude yourself or object. The Court will hold a hearing in this case (Gordon v. Apple Computer, Inc., Case No. 5:06-cv-05358) on September 8, 2008, at 9:00 a.m. to consider whether to approve (1) the settlement and (2) attorneys' fees and expenses of $849,500 and a service payment to Plaintiff of $500. You may appear at the hearing, but you don't have to. To obtain a full notice and claim form, go to www.rosenthalco.com/gordonvapple or call toll-free 1-888-539-5706. For more details, go to www.rosenthalco.com/gordonvapple or write to Helen Zeldes, Esq., 249 S. Highway 101, #370, Solana Beach, CA 92075.

Exhibit 1

Configuration Codes of iBook and PowerBook Computers Covered by Settlement

iBook and PowerBook computers with serial numbers that include the following configuration codes are covered by the Settlement. To determine the configuration code, please look at the serial number for your computer. The configuration code is the last three characters of the serial number.

iBook Computers:

MRR
N1N
N4P
N4R
N4S
N4T
NDP
NDQ
NDR
NDV
NDW
NDX
NRL
NRM
NRN
NVH
P7Y
PB8
PB9
PBA
PBB
PBC
PBD
PBE
PBF
PBG
PBM
PBN
PER
PES
PET
PGH
PGN
PGY
PH0
PH1
PH2
PMM
QE4
QF9
QHU
QHV
QJP
QQC
RCQ
RCR
RCS
RCT
RCU
RCV
RER

PowerBook Computers:

MRT
MVZ
MYN
N1Q
N4L
N4M
NEM
NEN
NGK
NGL
NGM
NGN
NGP
NGQ
NL5
NL6
NL7
NMH
NMJ
NMK
NRY
NRZ
NS0
NS1
P0B
P22
P23
PGK
PGL
PGM
PHK
PHL
PLW
PLX
QHX
QJD
QRV
QRW
RG3
RG4
RG5
RG6
RJ3
RJ6
RJ7
RJF
SB7
SWZ
SX0
T1V
U34

The Lowdown on Loops

Tips for obtaining and editing GarageBand loops

BY CHRISTOPHER BREEN

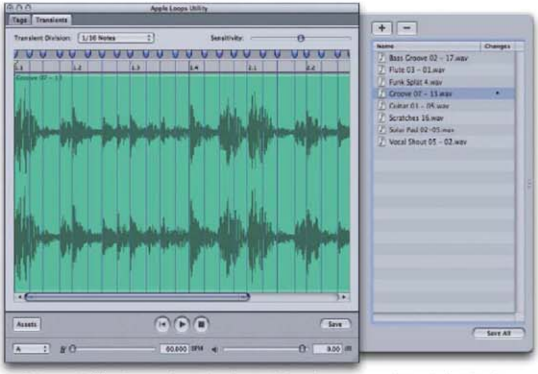
Although GarageBand has evolved to become a popular program for building podcasts, it continues to be an invaluable tool for musicians, DJs, and producers. And for these musically inclined individuals, loops remain much of the program's focus.

Here are some useful tips for getting more out of loops.

The Basics

GarageBand loops come in two varieties—Software Instrument loops, composed of MIDI data that triggers sounds from GarageBand's software synthesizers, and Real Instrument loops, which are digital audio recordings. To move either type into a GarageBand project, simply click on the Loop Browser button, use the browser to locate a loop you like (click on a loop to audition it, and click on it again to stop playing it), and drag the loop into a track.

Software Instrument loops are colored green and Real Instrument loops are blue. Real Instrument loops require less processing power to play, meaning that GarageBand is less likely to bog down when playing scads of blue loops versus scads of green ones. In GarageBand, you can convert Software Instrument loops into Real Instrument loops either by holding down the option key while dragging them from the browser into your project, or by enabling the Convert To Real Instrument option within the Loops tab of GarageBand's preferences. The disadvantage of converting MIDI loops to digital audio is that once you do so, you can no longer edit their note data—you can't move notes around or alter their position or length, for example.



Apple Loops Utility To create loops that change pitch and tempo correctly, use the free Apple Loops Utility.

Obtaining Loops

GarageBand ships with more than 1,000 loops. Great as the included loops may be, we've heard and used them all by now. You can make your work more original by expanding your library of loops.

Apple offers one solution with its five $99 Jam Packs—Rhythm Section, Remix Tools, Symphony Orchestra, World Music, and Voices.

A variety of third parties sell loops in the Apple Loops format as well, including BandmateLoops (www.bandmateloops.com), Smart Loops (www.smartloops.com), Zero-G (www.zero-g.co.uk), PowerFX (www.powerfx.com), Drums On Demand (www.drumsondemand.com), Beta Monkey Music (www.betamonkeymusic.com), and Big Fish Audio (www.bigfishaudio.com). You can find packages as inexpensive as $4 for a small downloadable sampling from BandmateLoops, or spend up to hundreds of dollars for DVD collections containing thousands of loops.

GarageBand can work with more than just the Apple loops format, however. For example, you can confidently add Acid loops (designed to work with Sony Creative Software's Windows-only Acid music application). They'll change pitch and tempo correctly in GarageBand, just like Apple loops.

And you can, of course, record your own performances into GarageBand as either digital audio or MIDI, select some of the audio, and then turn your performance into a loop by choosing Edit: Add To Loop Library. Or you can drag a Standard MIDI File into GarageBand to split the file into its component tracks, and add just the tracks (or portions of tracks) to the loop library through the Add To Loop Library command.

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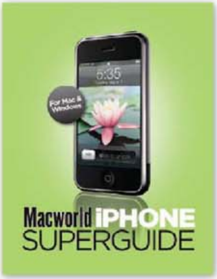
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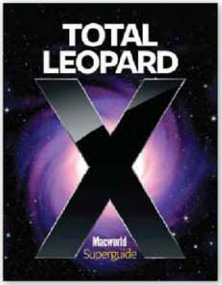
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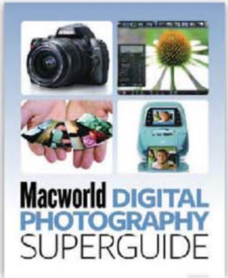
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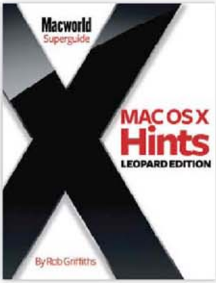
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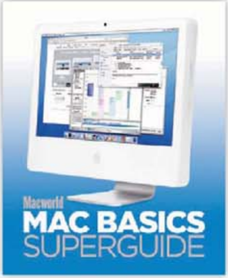
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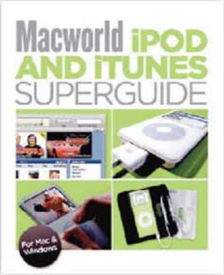
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Adding Loops

In addition to employing the Add To Loop Library command, you can add audio files to your loop library by dragging them into the program's Loop Browser. If you drag a single file into the Loop Browser, a sheet appears that lets you name the loop, assign a scale to it—Major, Minor, Any, Neither, or Good For Both—and a genre (see "Add to the Loop Library"). You can also add instrument descriptors—Bass, Drums, or Guitars, for example—and assign mood descriptors such as Acoustic, Electric, Melodic, and Processed. These tags make it easier to locate an appropriate loop using the descriptor buttons in GarageBand's Loop Browser.

If you drag a folder of files into the browser, GarageBand will add them along with a new item bearing the name of the folder—Funk Drums 1, for example—in the Loops pop-up menu that appears at the top of the browser.

Converting Loops

You can turn just about any audio file you bring into GarageBand into a loop, but not all loops will behave as you want.

To make a well-behaved loop—one that can change pitch as well as tempo in a musically savvy way—turn to the Apple Loops Utility, which is part of Apple's free Apple Loops SDK 1.3.1 (macworld.com/3531).

After installing it, launch Apple Loops Utility (found in /Applications/Utilities). In the sheet that appears, navigate to the audio files you'd like to turn into loops and select the ones you want to tag—the program supports AIFF and WAV files only. After you've added them to the Assets drawer, select a loop and alter its tags. As with GarageBand's Add To Loop Library sheet, you can assign descriptors to your loops. Additionally, you can assign a key to your loop via the Key pop-up menu. When you do this and enable the Looping option, the resulting loop will change both tempo and pitch.

You can record your own performances and then turn them into loops.

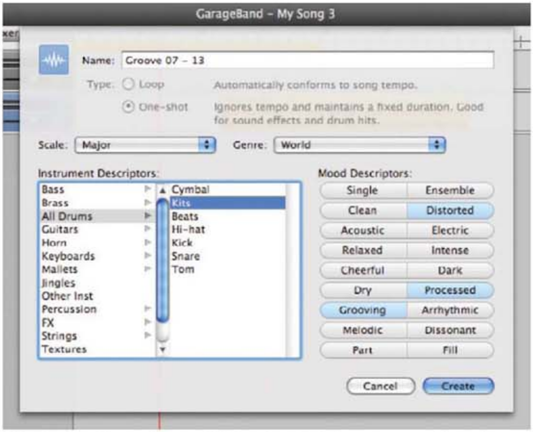
If you can discern the loop's real key, it's best to assign that so you can more easily identify appropriate loops in the Loop Browser—for example, loops in the key of F when your project is in F. You don't have to do that, however—the key assignment is relative. For example, you can take a guitar loop in the key of G and assign the key of C to it in Apple Loops Utility. But keep in mind that when you use that loop in a GarageBand project based on the default key of C, it will play as it was originally recorded—in G. Change the project to the key of D—a whole step up—and the pitch of the loop goes up a whole step to A.

The ability to successfully stretch a loop with tempo changes depends on adequate transient assignments. You can't adjust transients in GarageBand, but you can in Apple Loops Utility. To do so, open a loop, enable the Looping option in the Tags tab, and click on the Transients tab. By default, Apple Loops Utility assigns transients near every 16th note—that 16th note marking is based on tempo and the number of beats assigned to the loop (see "Apple Loops Utility").

Just opening the loop in Apple Loops Utility and enabling the Looping option is often enough to make a loop sound better, because of the automatically assigned transients. You can assign your own transients, however, by clicking in the dark area above the waveform. A new transient appears where you click. You can then move the marker anywhere you'd like (you can also move the assigned markers, but you should rarely need to). You can also assign a finer or broader grid than the default 16th-note division by choosing a different value—from Whole Notes to 1/64 Notes—from the Transient Division pop-up menu at the top of the Transient tab.

Circling Back

It's well worth your while to seek out new loops and tweak the ones you have. A copy of GarageBand equipped with a unique selection of loops becomes a more personalized musical instrument and helps expand your creative possibilities. ☒



GarageBand – My Song 3

Name: Groove 07 – 13

Type: ○ Loop Automatically conforms to song tempo.

● One-shot Ignores tempo and maintains a fixed duration. Good for sound effects and drum hits.

Scale: Major

Genre: World

Add to the Loop Library Drag an audio file into GarageBand's Loop Browser to add tags to it.

Senior Editor **Christopher Breen** holds down the keyboard position in his seven-piece R&B band, System 9.

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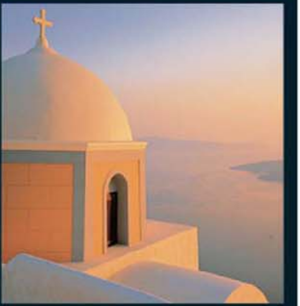

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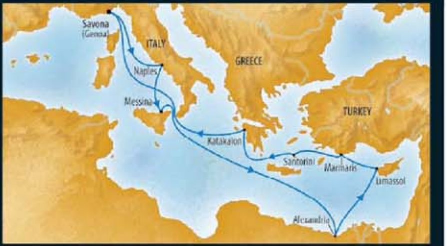

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How to Buy a Lens

Give your DSLR new powers without spending a fortune

BY RICK LEPAGE

If you purchased your digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) camera as part of a kit, you already have a basic lens that takes pretty good pictures. However, part of the attraction of this type of camera is that you can switch out lenses to get the best shot in any situation. From powerful zooms that get you up close, to high-speed lenses that specialize in low-light settings, you have plenty of options for your second lens. Some lenses go for more than you spent on your camera, but you don't have to pay a lot to get a great lens. The real question is, how do you find the right one for your needs?

Understanding Glass

To understand what makes one lens different from another, you first need to be familiar with a few basic concepts.

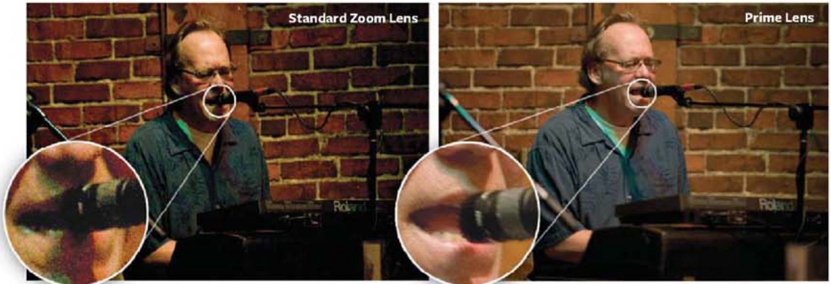
Focal Length Technically speaking, a lens's *focal length*, represented in millimeters, is the distance between the rear element of the lens and the focal plane, where the parallel beams of light entering a lens converge to a point. This matters to you because the focal length determines the lens's viewing angle. The shorter the focal length, the wider the field of view, and the more of a scene your camera can capture. As you increase the focal length, the field of view narrows—so you see less of the scene—and objects appear magnified.

In the world of traditional 35mm film, focal lengths ranging from 16mm to 35mm are generally considered wide-angle. A 50mm lens is referred to as "normal"—because it comes closest to covering the same field of view as the human eye—and anything over 100mm is considered telephoto. However, focal length is a bit more complicated when it comes to DSLRs. That's because many cameras' image sensors are smaller than 35mm film, so they crop out some of the image and give the effect of a longer focal length. To get a sense of how this discrepancy will impact the viewing angle of your lens, you have to multiply the digital camera's crop factor—which you'll find in its manual—by the focal length of the lens. A Nikon D40, for example, has a crop factor of 1.5×. As a result, a 35mm lens has a field of view equivalent to that of a 52mm lens when placed on the D40.

Get the Right Nikon Lens

TIP If you have one of Nikon's entry-level DSLRs—the D40, D40x, or D60—you should be aware that the autofocus feature on some older Nikon lenses won't work with those cameras. You can still take pictures with the camera, but you will have to focus manually. If autofocus is important to you, make sure you buy a lens only from the AF-S or AF-I series.

Aperture The other key component in evaluating a lens is its *aperture*. The aperture is one of the mechanisms that con-



Standard Zoom Lens

Prime Lens

Two Lenses, One Night These images show the difference a prime lens with a wide aperture can make. I took the image on the left with Canon's 24–85mm f/3.5–4.5 lens. Even at the lens's maximum aperture (f/4.5), I had to raise the ISO to 3200, creating more image noise and harsher tones. I shot the image on the right with Canon's 85mm f/1.8 prime lens. The wider aperture let in more light and allowed me to lower the ISO to 1600, which reduced the image noise and more accurately captured the scene's lighting. (I shot both images at 1/60th of a second without a tripod.)

trol the amount of light that passes through the lens to the image sensor. The aperture is usually referred to in terms of f-stops, and is represented by a number such as f/2.8. The smaller the number, the larger the opening, and the more light it allows into the camera. So a lens that opens to a wide aperture lets you maintain faster shutter speeds in low light—this can be essential for obtaining sharp images from a handheld camera. Wider apertures also provide more creative control by giving you the option to throw backgrounds out of focus.

The speed of a lens is described by its maximum aperture. Some lenses, for example, max out at f/4.5, while others can open all the way to f/2 or wider. If you're looking at a zoom lens, which has a range of focal lengths, you'll see the maximum aperture listed as a range, such as 55–200mm f/4–5.6. This lens zooms from 55mm, with a maximum aperture of f/4, to 200mm, with a maximum aperture of f/5.6. This means your camera will choose a slower shutter speed as you zoom in.

Keep in mind that faster lenses—lenses with smaller maximum apertures—are generally both heavier and more expensive than slower lenses. While you might not mind spending a bit more for a better lens, the extra weight may be less enticing.

Image Stabilization At slower shutter speeds, an imperceptible move on your part can create a blurry photo. A lens or camera with stabilization can counteract this shaking, letting you shoot handheld shots in low light. Canon lenses with image stabilization have IS in their name, while Nikon uses the term Vibration Reduction, or VR. You'll pay a bit more for image-stabilized lenses, but they're generally worth it—especially if you don't carry a tripod. Of course, you won't need stabilized lenses if your camera body offers image stabilization. (For more on image stabilization, go to macworld.com/2791.)

Adding a new lens—and using it regularly—will help you become a better photographer, just by changing your perspective.

Rent a Lens

While you can walk into a camera store, ask a few questions, and walk out with an expensive lens, doing a little research ahead of time can help prevent buyer's remorse.

I've found that one of the best ways to determine whether a lens will work for me is to rent it. Many camera stores that cater to the pro photographer will let you rent popular lenses for a weekend at a reasonable price.

If you can't find a local store, go online. Rentglass.com rents lenses for Canon and Nikon DSLRs on a weekly basis. This isn't just a great way to test a lens out, it also lets you take a fancy lens with you on vacation. While the rental rates aren't inexpensive, they're a bargain when you want to play with a $1,500 extreme-wide-angle lens that you could never justify buying. Make sure you opt for the insurance coverage, however, or check with your credit card company about damage claims: you don't want to end up with a $1,500 paperweight.

Building Your Collection

The lens included with many DSLR kits takes you from a moderate wide-angle view to a slight telephoto. These lenses aren't bad—they're lightweight and take good pictures when you're shooting outdoors in daylight or indoors with a flash. However, they tend to be slow, which means they don't do well in low-light conditions. When you're ready to expand, consider investing in a *prime* lens (which has a single focal length) or a longer zoom lens.

Prime Lenses If you're looking to develop your compositional skills and get a better lens in the process, I recommend purchasing a prime lens with a focal length between 35mm and 85mm. Prime lenses tend to have better glass in them than comparably priced zoom lenses, and they get you out of the "zoom rut," where you stand in one place and zoom in or out to fill your frame. With a fixed-length lens, you need to move around to get your shot, and over time that act will help you create much better compositions. Also, most prime lenses have a wider maximum aperture, which makes it easier to get sharp shots in low light.

So where do you start when selecting a prime lens? All of the major camera companies offer good prime lenses from 35mm to 100mm at prices under $500. For Digital Rebel owners looking for a good starter lens, I recommend Canon's 35mm f/2 and 50mm f/1.8. Both lenses offer better low-light performance than the zoom lenses that come in the kits. The 50mm f/1.8 in particular is a bargain—you can find it for under $100 at most camera stores—and is extremely light. You can find comparable prime lenses for Nikon, Olympus, and other DSLR systems.

Zoom Lens If you want to grab action photos, a telephoto lens in the 100mm to 300mm range is your best bet. Thanks to the crop factor on DSLRs, you don't need much zooming power. For example, Canon's 70–300mm f/4–5.6 IS lens—one of my all-time favorites—becomes a 112–480mm zoom on a Canon Digital Rebel XTi. But remember that, unless you're willing to spend a lot of money for an f/2.8 telephoto lens, you'll need to boost the ISO in many situations to get shots at reasonable shutter speeds. This is where it pays to get a lens with image stabilization.

In the end, choose the lens that best fits the type of shooting you want to do. But don't be afraid to play around. You'll find that adding a new lens—and using it regularly—will help you become a better photographer, just by changing your perspective. ☒

Rick LePage is the editor in chief of the *Photoshop Elements Techniques* newsletter. He also runs the photo-printer Web site Printerville (www.printerville.net).

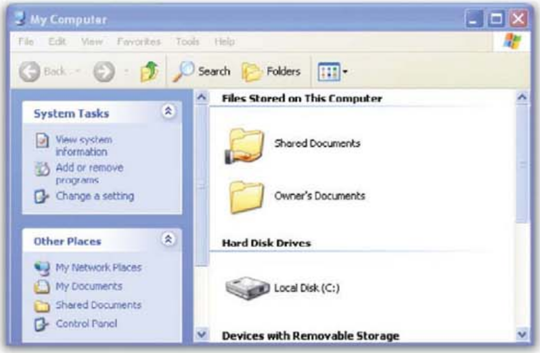
Networking with Windows

Sharing files between Macs and Windows PCs

BY DAVID POGUE

Mac OS X 10.5 represents a historic moment in Mac-Windows relations: it lets Macs and Windows PCs see each other on the network, with no special software (or talent) required.

In fact, you can go in either direction. Your Mac can see shared folders on a Windows PC, and a Windows PC can see shared folders on your Mac. It works as follows.


My Computer
File
Edit
View
Favorites
Tools
Help
Back
Search
Folders
System Tasks
View system information
Add or remove programs
Change a setting
Other Places
My Network Places
My Documents
Shared Documents
Control Panel
Files Stored on This Computer
Shared Documents
Owner's Documents
Hard Disk Drives
Local Disk (C:)
Devices with Removable Storage

Shared Documents In Windows XP, the default folder for sharing is called Shared Documents; in Windows Vista, it's called Public.

Seeing Windows from the Mac

If you have a Windows PC on your network, you can share files on it from your Mac by using one of two approaches.

The first method is supersimple: you just copy the files you want to share into a central, fully accessible shared folder.

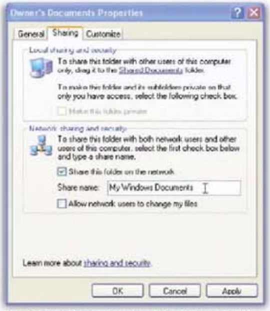
In Windows XP, that special folder is the Shared Documents folder, which you can find by choosing Start: My Computer. To share it (or any other folder in Windows XP), right-click on it, choose Properties, and then select Share This Folder On The Network. In the Share Name box, type a name for the folder as it will appear on the network. (No spaces are allowed.)

In Windows Vista, that special shared folder is called Public, and it appears in the Navigation pane of every Explorer window. There's one Public folder for the whole computer, not one per account holder.

The second method is to share any Windows folder: Right-click on the folder you want to share, choose Properties from the shortcut menu, click on the Sharing tab, and turn on Share This Folder On The Network. Repeat for any other folders you want to make available to your Mac.

Back in Mac OS X, look in the Shared section of the Finder sidebar. The shared PC should appear as an individual computer there. If it's part of a workgroup, click on All, and then double-click on the workgroup name. (Unless you or a network administrator changed it, that name is probably Mshome or Workgroup.) Now the names of the individual PCs on the network should appear in your Finder window.

If the files you want are in the Shared Documents or Public folder of the PC, you're done. They should appear on your Mac screen, no password required. If the files are in another shared folder, read on.


Owner's Documents Properties
General
Sharing
Customize
Local sharing and security
Network sharing and security
OK
Cancel
Apply

To share this folder with other users of this computer only, drag it to the Shared Documents folder.

To make this folder and its subfolders private so that only you have access, select the following check box.

☐ Make this folder private

To share this folder with both network users and other users of this computer, select the first check box below and type a share name.

☑ Share this folder on the network

Share name: My Windows Documents

☐ Allow network users to change my files

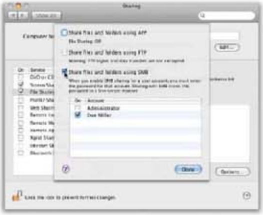
Learn more about sharing and security.

Sharing Folders If you want to share a specific folder in Windows, right-click on it, select Properties, and then open the Sharing tab.

By the Book

This article is an excerpt from *Mac OS X Leopard Edition: The Missing Manual*, by David Pogue (copyright 2007 David Pogue). Reprinted by permission of O'Reilly Media (www.oreillynet.com). All rights reserved.

Mac OS X
Leopard Edition
THE MISSING MANUAL
David Pogue



Sharing from the Mac To share Mac folders with Windows PCs, open the Sharing preference pane, select File Sharing, click on Options, and turn on Share Files And Folders Using SMB.

A Connect As button will appear in the upper right corner of the Finder window. Click on it. (If the PC is running Windows XP Pro, you must turn off Simple File Sharing first. To do that, choose Tools: Folder Options in any Explorer window. Click on the View tab and turn off Use Simple File Sharing.)

The PC will want to make sure that you're authorized to visit it. Select Registered User, then enter the name and password for your account on the PC, and click on OK.

You will now see a list of shared folders on the PC. Choose the one you want to open, and then click on OK. The Windows folder should show up on your Mac screen, ready to use. The icon of the shared folder should appear on your desktop, and an Eject button should show up next to the PC's name in the Finder sidebar.

When Macs and PCs Don't See Each Other

If your Mac's icon doesn't show up on the PC at all, or vice versa, it's probably because the Mac doesn't know anything about Windows workgroups. Even a lowly home PC is part of a workgroup, whether it knows it or not. And until your Mac joins that club, it won't be able to see your PCs, and they won't be able to see it.

So if you're having no luck with this whole Mac-PC thing, try this: Open the Network preference pane. Click on whatever connection you're on right now (say, AirPort or Ethernet), then on Advanced, and then on WINS.

You'll encounter a peculiar set of controls here. The Workgroup pop-up menu lists the workgroups that your Mac sees. Choose Workgroup from the pop-up menu. Click on OK, and then click on Apply.

Now marvel as your Windows PCs' names show up in the Finder sidebar, where they didn't appear before. (Of course, your workgroup name might not be Workgroup, but that and Mshome are the two most common Windows workgroup names.)

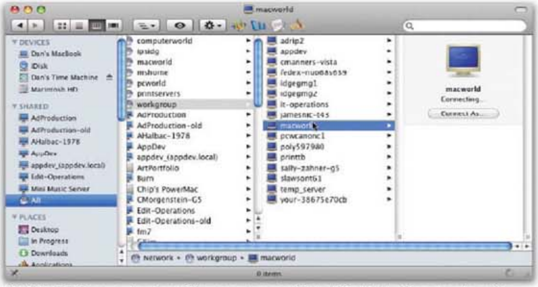
Seeing a Mac from Windows

Not only can your Mac see other PCs on the network, but those PCs can see your Mac, too.

On the Mac, open the Sharing preference pane. Select File Sharing, and then click on Options. Turn on Share Files And Folders Using SMB. Below that check box, you'll see a list of all the accounts on your Mac. Select which Mac user accounts you want to make accessible; you must type in each account's password, too. Click on Done to finish.

Before you close System Preferences, study the line where it says "Other users can access your computer at afp://*your computer's name*." You'll need this name.

In Windows XP, open My Network Places; in Windows Vista, choose Start: Network. Your Mac's icon should appear by itself in the network window.


macworld
DEVICES
Dan's MacBook
iDisk
Dan's Time Machine
Macintosh HD
SHARED
AdProduction
AdProduction-old
AHalbac-1978
AppDev
appdev_(appdev.local)
Edit-Operations
Mini Music Server
All
PLACES
Desktop
In Progress
Downloads
Applications
computerworld
ipsidg
macworld
mshome
pcworld
printservers
workgroup
AdProduction
AdProduction-old
AHalbac-1978
AppDev
appdev_(appdev.local)
ArtPortfolio
Burn
Chip's PowerMac
CMorgenstein-G5
Edit-Operations
Edit-Operations-old
fm7
adrip2
appdev
cmanners-vista
fedex-nu08a5659
idgegmg1
idgegmg2
it-operations
jamesnic-t43
macworld
pcwcanonc1
poly597980
printtb
sally-zahner-g5
slawsont61
temp_server
your-38675e70cb
macworld
Connecting...
Connect As...
Network
workgroup
macworld
0 items

Find the PC Once you've shared files on a networked PC, look for it in the Shared section of the Finder sidebar; it may be hidden in a Windows workgroup.

Double-click on the Mac's icon. Public folder stuff is available immediately. For other items, you have to sign in with your Mac account name and password. Type your Mac's name in all capitals (or its IP address), then a backslash, and then your Mac account's short name. (You can find out your Mac's name in the Sharing preference pane.) Enter your Mac account's password. Turn on Remember My Password if you plan to do this again someday. Click on OK.

You should now see your Home folder. If your Mac's icon doesn't appear, wait a minute. Try restarting the PC. In Windows XP, try clicking on Microsoft Windows Network or View Workgroup Computers in the task pane.

If your Mac still doesn't show up, you'll have to add it the hard way. In the address bar of any Windows window, type `\\your Mac's name\your short account name`, taking care to use backslashes, not normal forward slashes; you can also type your Mac's IP address in place of its computer name.

In the future, you won't have to do so much burrowing; your Mac's icon should appear automatically in the My Network Places or Network window.

David Pogue is the *New York Times* technology columnist and the creator of the Missing Manual series.

Best Automator Downloads

Building better workflows with third-party actions **BY BEN WALDIE**

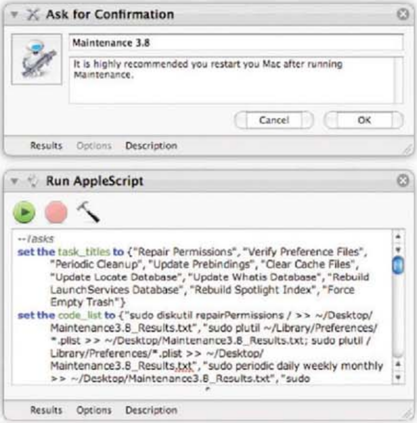
Automator is a great tool for automating basic tasks on your Mac, no scripting or programming required. By dragging prebuilt actions together, you can quickly and easily create countless workflows to do things you might otherwise have to do manually.

Mac OS X comes with hundreds of Automator actions to get you started. These actions can handle basic tasks within the operating system itself, as well as in many of OS X's bundled applications, including Address Book, iCal, iTunes, Mail, and Safari. But as useful as all of these built-in actions are, they can't do everything.

Fortunately, third-party developers have been busy building Automator actions of their own. Like the built-in actions, these third-party actions work with OS X itself and its bundled applications, as well as with all kinds of other programs. Some of the actions come from big-name software companies (the latest version of Microsoft Office, for example, includes some handy actions of its own), and some come from individual programmers.

Wherever you get them, these third-party actions make Automator even more useful than it already is. Here are a few of my favorites. To install any of them, follow the Web link at the end of each entry; you'll find installation instructions there.

Online Extras
You can download an archive containing all of the actions listed here, as well as sample workflows using some of them, from macworld.com/3539.



Maintenance 3.8

It is highly recommended you restart you Mac after running Maintenance.

```
--tasks
set the task_titles to {"Repair Permissions", "Verify Preference Files",
        "Periodic Cleanup", "Update Prebindings", "Clear Cache Files",
        "Update Locate Database", "Update Whatis Database", "Rebuild
        LaunchServices Database", "Rebuild Spotlight Index", "Force
        Empty Trash"}
set the code_list to {"sudo diskutil repairPermissions / >> ~/Desktop/
        Maintenance3.8_Results.txt", "sudo plutil ~/Library/Preferences/
        *.plist >> ~/Desktop/Maintenance3.8_Results.txt; sudo plutil /
        Library/Preferences/*.plist >> ~/Desktop/
        Maintenance3.8_Results.txt", "sudo periodic daily weekly monthly
        >> ~/Desktop/Maintenance3.8_Results.txt", "sudo
```

Maintenance Save this AppleScript in an Automator workflow, and it can initiate routine Mac maintenance tasks from the Finder, Automator, or iCal.

Dispense Items Incrementally

Automator's new Loop action lets you repeat a section of your workflow over and over. Unfortunately, it has a glitch: if your workflow passes multiple files or folders to a loop, Automator will send the entire batch through the loop all at once. That may be fine if you're working with a small number of items. But if your workflow generates a list of hundreds or even thousands of Finder items, and then sends them to an application, you could find yourself with hundreds of files open at one time. Nyhthawk Productions' Dispense Items Incrementally fixes this problem by taking a batch of files as input and then releasing them to an Automator loop one at a time. Once all the items have been through the loop, the action stops the workflow (macworld.com/3534).

Download URLs as PDFs

Saving Web pages in PDF format can be very useful. You can then share them with friends via e-mail, archive them for offline viewing, or integrate them into a document. Scott Garner's Download URLs as PDFs action makes saving them simple. The action takes URLs from a previous action (such as Get Current Web Page from Safari or Get Specified URLs), downloads those

Run Python Script
Results
Options
Description

Run Python Script Just as Automator's own Run AppleScript lets you run AppleScripts from workflows, this third-party action lets you run Python scripts within a workflow.

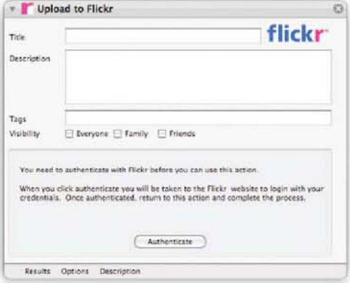
Automator Resources

SITE	URL	WHAT'S THERE
Apple	www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/automator/	actions, workflows
Automator.us	www.automator.us	actions, workflows, tutorials, videos
Automator World	www.automatorworld.com	actions, workflows, news, forums
MacScripter	www.automatoractions.com	actions, workflows, forums

Web pages in PDF format to a specified folder, and outputs the downloaded files for further processing by the workflow. Within the action's preferences, you can specify the PDF's orientation, whether it will include images and backgrounds, the file name, and more (macworld.com/3535).

Flickr Upload

James Pitt's Flickr Upload action makes sharing your photos easier than ever. Once you've authenticated the action with your Flickr account, you can use it to build workflows that upload photos directly from Aperture or iPhoto, or even as you're downloading them from your camera. The action not only handles the uploading, but can also apply a title, a description, and tags to your photos, and specify who is allowed to view them (macworld.com/3532).



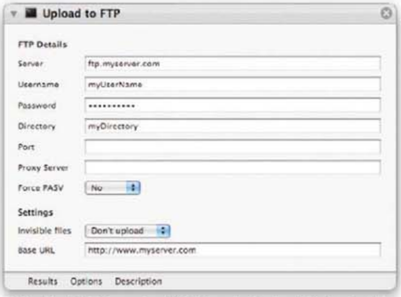
You need to authenticate with Flickr before you can use this action.

When you click authenticate you will be taken to the Flickr website to login with your credentials. Once authenticated, return to this action and complete the process.

Upload to Flickr If you upload lots of digital photos to Flickr, you'll appreciate this action, which will let you do so from iPhoto or Aperture—or as you're downloading your snaps from your camera.

Maintenance

Performing routine system maintenance, such as repairing disk permissions, can be tedious. Automator's built-in actions won't make it any less tedious, but Jesse Hogue's Maintenance can. It lets you initiate a variety of system maintenance routines, including repairing permissions, clearing cache files, and rebuilding the Spotlight index, from within an Automator workflow. Maintenance is not an Automator action per se. Rather, it's a customized version of Automator's Run AppleScript action, saved as an application. You run it by double-clicking on it in the Finder, by opening it in Automator, or by adjusting the workflow's AppleScript code and telling iCal to run it as an alarm, so it'll happen regularly with no intervention from you (macworld.com/3536).



Server: ftp.myserver.com
Username: myUserName
Password: ••••••••••
Directory: myDirectory
Force PASV: No
Invisible files: Don't upload
Base URL: http://www.myserver.com

Upload to FTP For running a Web site, or just for simple file sharing, this action can automate the process of uploading your files.

Run Python Script

Automator's built-in Run AppleScript and Run Shell Script actions let anyone who knows AppleScript or Unix do all kinds of cool stuff. Toxicsoftware.com's Run Python Script action extends these possibilities even further, allowing you to run Python scripts from within an Automator workflow (macworld.com/3537).

Run Ruby Script

Building on the success and popularity of the Run Python Script action, Jason Foreman has released a similar Run Ruby Script action, which lets you run Ruby code from Automator (macworld.com/3538).

Upload to FTP

If you have to regularly upload files or folders to an FTP server, this action from Peter Dekkers will make it quicker and easier. You give it your FTP server address, user name, password, root directory, and other settings. When it receives files and folders as input in a workflow, it uploads them and provides their URLs as output. You can then insert those URLs into e-mails or text files, or whatever else you want your workflow to do (macworld.com/3533).

View with Quick Look

Leopard's Quick Look is a fast, easy way to preview file contents without launching a full-blown application. Nyhthawk's View with Quick Look action brings it to Automator, allowing you to create workflows that will preview folder contents, Mail attachments, and more, all within a Quick Look window. The action itself has no settings to configure. Simply add it to a workflow, following an action that outputs Finder items (macworld.com/3534).

The Final Word

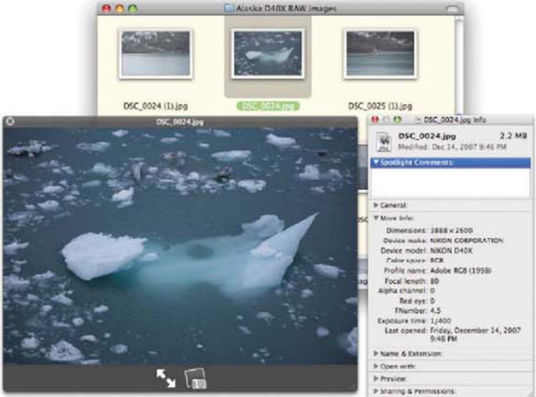
Those certainly aren't all the third-party Automator actions available online. Check out "Automator Resources" for a list of Web sites where you'll find more actions, as well as downloadable workflows and Automator tutorials. ☒

Ben Waldie is the author of *Automator for Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard: Visual QuickStart Guide* (Peachpit Press, 2008) and the president of Automated Workflows (www.automatedworkflows.com).

Help Desk

Mac OS X Hints

The insider tips you won't get from Apple **BY ROB GRIFFITHS**



Modified: Dec 14, 2007 9:46 PM

Dimensions: 3888 x 2600
Device make: NIKON CORPORATION
Device model: NIKON D40X
Color space: RGB
Profile name: Adobe RGB (1998)
Focal length: 80
Alpha channel: 0
Red eye: 0
FNumber: 4.5
Exposure time: 1/400
Last opened: Friday, December 14, 2007 9:46 PM

Get More Information If you love how easy it is to use Leopard's Quick Look but wish you could see more detail about the files you're viewing, open an Inspector window, too.

View File Information in Quick Look

Quick Look mode in Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard) is a great way to preview a bunch of files in a folder, especially image files. Just open the folder containing the images, select an image, press the spacebar, and then use the arrow keys to move through the images. While Quick Look mode lets you see exactly what each image file looks like, it won't tell you anything about an image's particulars—for example, the full path to the file or its ownership, permissions, or EXIF tags. (EXIF tags are little bits of data that are stored when you take a digital picture. They include such things as the picture's date and time and exposure information.)

So here's how to view both your image and the EXIF data at the same time: open an Inspector window alongside the Quick Look window (see "Get More Information"). The Inspector is the floating, always-updated relative of the Get Info window. To open an Inspector window, hold down the option key, and then choose File: Show Inspector (or just press ⌘-option-I). This will open a floating window that constantly changes to reflect the selected file or folder. Open your folder of images, press the spacebar, and position the Quick Look and Inspector windows so you can see them both.

Now browse around using the arrow keys, and as you select different images in the Finder, both the Quick Look and Inspector windows will update to reflect your selection. I find this most useful when I'm looking at images, but you might also use this technique to check the ownership and permissions on a number of files, or to ensure that you've set the same Spotlight Comments for related files you'd like to find with a Spotlight search.

I HELPED THE
HELP
DESK

Have a hint to share?

Go to MacOSXHints.com to submit it. This column was based on tips from Robert Ameeti, Jerrod Hofferth, Andrew James, Allister Jenks, and anonymous contributors. Each month, the author of our favorite tip receives the *Help Desk* mug.

Try Multiple Mighty Mouse Tricks

If you use Apple's Mighty Mouse, its scroll ball holds more capabilities than you probably suspect. You might know you can use it to zoom in on your screen (press control and move the scroll ball), switch between active programs (press ⌘-tab and move the scroll ball), and adjust the volume in Apple's iTunes or QuickTime Player (hover over the volume slider and then move the scroll ball). But that's not all it can do.

If you use Leopard's Spaces feature, press F8 (to enter Spaces' overview mode) and move the scroll ball. As you do, you'll see each available space highlight in a logical sequence—move the

MUG PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BELANGER

scroll ball up and down to select between vertically aligned spaces, and move it left and right for the horizontally aligned spaces. To select a highlighted space, do not click the mouse button, as that will instead activate whichever space is under the cursor. Instead, press return, and the highlighted space will become selected.

You can use the same trick in Exposé's All Windows mode. Press F9 to activate All Windows and then move the scroll ball around. You'll see that each window highlights in a logical, if not entirely predictable, manner. Scroll up and down to select vertically aligned windows or sideways to select horizontally aligned windows. Again, to select a highlighted window, press return—don't click the mouse, since your pointer could be anywhere on the screen. If you own a third-party mouse with a scroll ball, give these tricks a try. They may work for you as well.

POWER TIP OF THE MONTH

Customize Front Row Menu Items

As of Leopard, Apple redesigned Front Row's icon-based interface so that you now choose your media from a series of menus—Movies, TV Shows, Music, and Photos. The nice thing about this is that the media center program's menu items are actually plug-ins, so you can easily disable them if you don't use them and would rather avoid the screen clutter.

In the Finder, navigate to the /System/Library/CoreServices folder. Select Front Row, control-click on the file, and choose Show Package Contents from the contextual menu. In the new window that appears, navigate to the Contents/PlugIns folder. The .frappliance folders you see here control which menu items you see in Front Row's interface. If you'd like to remove a menu item from Front Row, first make a backup copy of that particular .frappliance folder, in case you want it back someday. The easiest way to do this is to just drag the folder to your desktop. The system will copy (not move) the chosen folder. Go back to the CoreServices folder and highlight the folder you want to remove. Press ⌘-delete, and enter your password when prompted. I strongly discourage you from disabling the FRSettings and FRSources folders—without these, you'll be unable to configure Front Row.

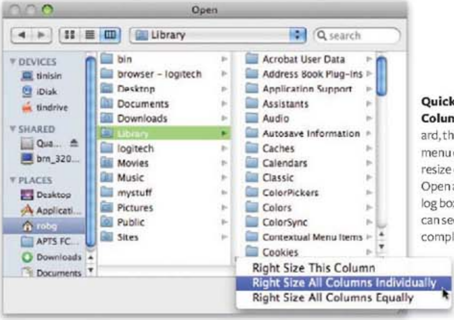
To make your changes take effect, you need to restart Front Row, which is always running in the background. Open Activity Monitor (in /Applications/Utilities) and find Front Row in the list of processes. Select it by clicking on it once, and then click on Quit Process in the toolbar. When you relaunch Front Row, its menus will reflect only the folders you left in place. If you ever want an item back, simply return the backup folder to the PlugIns folder. You'll be asked to authenticate, so supply your password when prompted. Run Disk Utility (in /Applications/Utilities) and use its Repair Permissions feature to set the correct ownership and privileges for the replaced folder.

Stop Cutoff Names in Column View

As much as I like column-view mode, one of its challenges, especially in the usually smallish Open and Save dialog boxes, is that the column widths never seem to be correct for the files and folders that I'm browsing. I find myself resizing columns all the time to reveal names that have been cut off. Luckily, a couple shortcuts (in both Tiger and Leopard) can help with this problem.

If you double-click on the double-line icon at the bottom of a column (beneath the arrow keys for scrolling through the column), the column will resize so you can see entire file names. If you option–double-click on one of those icons, then *all* the columns will resize to the maximum width necessary to display the longest name. Confusingly, this doesn't work exactly the same way when you're looking at Finder windows. In that case, option–double-clicking sets all columns equal to the width of the widest column in the path. That can lead to some truly wide columns.

As of Leopard, there's now a contextual menu hiding under the column-resize widget in Open and Save dialog boxes. When you control-click on this, three self-explanatory choices will appear (see "Quickly Resize Columns"). I hope this feature will soon find its way to Finder windows, where it would be especially useful.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DEVICES
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PLACES
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Applicati...
robg
APTS FC...
Downloads
Documents
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Desktop
Documents
Downloads
Library
logitech
Movies
Music
mystuff
Pictures
Public
Sites
Acrobat User Data
Address Book Plug-Ins
Application Support
Assistants
Audio
Autosave Information
Caches
Calendars
Classic
ColorPickers
Colors
ColorSync
Contextual Menu Items
Cookies
Right Size This Column
Right Size All Columns Individually
Right Size All Columns Equally

Quickly Resize Columns In Leopard, this new pop-up menu can help you resize columns in Open and Save dialog boxes so that you can see the files' complete names.

Print All Data in Safari 3 Forms

One of Apple Safari 3's new features is the ability to resize text-input boxes. I find this feature very useful, as input boxes on many sites are simply too small for seeing more than a few lines of what you're typing. It's easy as pie to

WHAT'S ONLINE

Replace Dock's Indicators Don't like the bluish active-program indicators in Leopard's Dock? Replace them (macworld.com/3528).

Simplify Working with Shared Disks Learn how to connect to and see mounted network shared disks more easily in Leopard (macworld.com/3529).

Compare Folders' Contents with Terminal Use a built-in Unix program to quickly compare two folders' contents (macworld.com/3530).

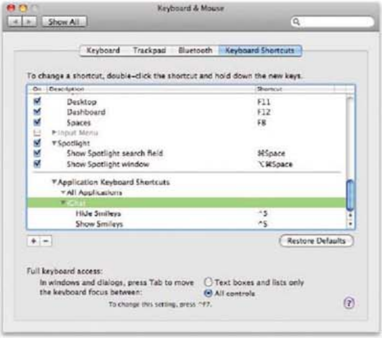
resize a text-input box—just grab its lower right corner and drag, as if you were resizing a window in any other application. Bingo—now you can see everything you're typing.

But here's the hint: you can use the same trick when *printing* forms, to make your input fields readable on the printout. Expand each input box so that it's large enough to reveal everything you typed, and then tell Safari to print the form. The output—whether you save to a PDF or print to a printer—will include your expanded boxes, so you've got a complete record of everything you filled in on the form.

Create Shortcuts for Changeable Menu Items

When a menu item's name changes—say, from Show View Options to Hide View Options—it's pretty clear what's going on. You'll only see Hide View Options in the Finder's View menu if the View Options palette is open; likewise, you'll only see Show View Options if it's not. If you're like me, though, you might anticipate running into a problem when it comes to assigning these changeable menu items the same keyboard shortcut so you can toggle the option on and off.

Smiley Shortcuts Mac OS X lets you use the same custom keyboard shortcut to toggle menu items off and on—even if the items have different names.

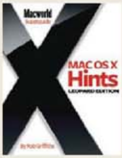


To change a shortcut, double-click the shortcut and hold down the new keys.

On	Description	Shortcut
☑	Desktop	F11
☑	Dashboard	F12
☑	Spaces	F8
☐	▸Input Menu	
☑	▾Spotlight	
☑	Show Spotlight search field	⌘Space
☑	Show Spotlight window	⌥⌘Space
	▾Application Keyboard Shortcuts	
	▾All Applications	
	▾iChat	
	Hide Smileys	^S
	Show Smileys	^S

Full keyboard access:
In windows and dialogs, press Tab to move the keyboard focus between:
○ Text boxes and lists only
● All controls
To change this setting, press ^F7.

Get More OS X Hints The *Mac OS X Hints* Superguide has over 200 of the best tips and tricks for customizing, speeding up, and uncovering hidden features in OS X 10.5. To order the downloadable PDF, the CD, or the full-color printed book, go to macworld.com/superguide.



In my case, I wanted a quick way to disable Apple iChat's smileys, via the View: Messages: Hide Smileys menu option. (There are quite a few instances where common code combinations, such as `=$`, turn into an unwanted smiley of some sort.) Assigning control-S to Hide Smileys is simple enough: just pop over to the Keyboard Shortcuts tab of the Keyboard & Mouse preference pane, click on the plus sign (+), set the Application pop-up menu to iChat, enter Hide Smileys for Menu Title, enter the desired keystrokes in the Keyboard Shortcut box, and then click on Add.

Despite my worries that assigning the same keyboard shortcut to Show Smileys and Hide Smileys might cause problems because of their different menu names, it turns out that Mac OS X doesn't care if you assign the same keyboard shortcut to more than one menu item (see "Smiley Shortcuts"). After adding the first shortcut, click on the plus sign again and repeat the process, this time changing Menu Title to Show Smileys. Assign it the same control-S shortcut and click on Add. These shortcuts work just as you would expect, with control-S toggling the feature on and off. Both shortcuts even show up in the menus.

Search iTunes by Song Rating

If you make extensive use of iTunes' ability to rate songs, then you'll be happy to hear that Apple's iTunes 7.6 now lets you search for star ratings using the built-in search box. Just click in the search box, and type one asterisk for each star value. To find all three-star-rated songs, for example, you'd enter `***`, two stars would be `**`, and so on. You can also combine asterisks and other values, so `Beatles ***` would find any music that contains the word *Beatles* and that's rated with at least three stars.

This new feature comes with a couple caveats, however. First, this kind of search will also find songs or artists with an asterisk in their name. So if your collection includes tunes by the band Si*Sé, you'll have to get used to seeing its name in all of your star-rating search results. The second caveat is that iTunes runs a "greater than or equal to" search on star ratings. So if you enter three asterisks, you'll see not only those songs you rated with three stars, but those with four and five stars as well. That's probably no big deal for quick and simple searches, but if you're really serious about combing through a big library using star ratings as your guide, you should probably use smart playlists (File: New Smart Playlist) instead. They let you use a song's rating as one of the conditions, and the results will exclude band or song names that contain an asterisk.

Senior Editor **Rob Griffiths** runs the MacOSXHints.com Web site.

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Mac 911

Solutions to your most vexing Mac problems **BY CHRISTOPHER BREEN**

iMovie Slow-Mo a No Go?

Q: In iMovie '08 I can't seem to find the effects I had with the previous version of iMovie, specifically the slow-motion effect. What's going on?

Susan Alexa

A: Apple's iMovie HD (🖱🖱🖱🖱; macworld.com/1112) and new iMovie '08 (🖱🖱🖱½; macworld.com/3097) may share a name and may both belong to their respective versions of the $79 iLife suite, but their similarities pretty much end there. They are two completely different programs. Many of iMovie HD's features are missing from the latest version of iMovie—regrettably, the slow-motion effect is one of them.

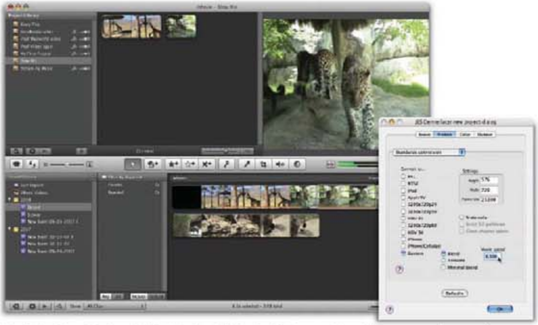
Your first option is to bid iMovie '08 adieu and return to the version of iMovie distributed with iLife '06. If the copy you had is gone, you can download a fresh one from Apple's Web site (macworld.com/3062). You needn't delete iMovie '08 when you install the older version, as iMovie HD and iMovie '08 will live in harmony in your Applications folder.

Your other option is to continue working in iMovie '08, extract the clip you want to slow down, slow it down, and then bring it back into iMovie. Karsten Schluter explains the process at macworld.com/3517. Here's the gist:

First, locate your clip. You do this by selecting the clip in iMovie's Event Library pane. In the clip pane to the right, control-click on the clip and choose Reveal In Finder from the contextual menu. The Mac will switch to the Finder to locate the file. Now download a copy of Jan Schotsman's free JES Deinterlacer (macworld.com/3518). JES Deinterlacer has a few talents, but the one we're specifically interested in is its ability to slow down or speed up a movie file.

Open your clip in the program (just drag it to the program icon), click on the Project tab, and enter a new value in the Movie Speed field. If you would like the movie to play half as fast, for example, enter `.5` here (see "Reclaim Slow Motion in iMovie"). To make it a tenth as fast, enter `.1`. You can leave the other settings alone.

Select the Output tab, click on Put, choose a location for your slowed-down clip, and click on OK at the bottom of the window. JES Deinterlacer will export your slow-motion clip. Now simply import that clip into iMovie '08 and edit as you will.



Reclaim Slow Motion in iMovie Apple's iMovie '08 dropped the ability to create slow-motion clips, but you can use JES Deinterlacer to do the trick, and then import the results.

Have a problem?
Go to the Mac 911 forum (macworld.com/2467) for help with your misbehaving Mac or applications.

Exclude Items When Searching

Q: I want to find all the images on my Mac that are *not* in iPhoto, as well as all my music that's *not* in iTunes. I don't want to automatically add the items to those programs, either—I just want to find them. Since OS X's Find command seems completely incapable of excluding a location, what's the shareware program I should use?

Steve Good

A: In fact, this task is not beyond OS X's capabilities. Just open the Spotlight preference pane, click on the Privacy tab, navigate to your user folder in the Finder, and drag the folders or items you'd like to exclude into the Privacy window. In your case, that would be the iTunes folder and the iPhoto Library package. When you conduct your next Spotlight or Finder search, you'll find all items except those within the iTunes and iPhoto Library folders.

If you're running OS X 10.5 (Leopard) and looking for a utility that allows you to do this kind of thing without turning to Spotlight's preference pane, check out Houdah Software's $26 HoudahSpot 2.1 (🖱🖱🖱🖱; macworld.com/3516). This version of HoudahSpot lets you create custom searches, based on Spotlight data, that are otherwise impossible. Among its many charms is the ability to exclude folders and their contents from your searches.

Move Address Book Data

Q: I've transferred my data from one Mac to another, but I ran into a problem with Address Book. All my contacts are .abcdp files that won't import into Address Book. How can I either import those files or turn my contacts into .csv files that can be imported into Address Book?

Rafael Sands

A: I recently had a similar problem with a neighbor's Mac. Like you, he transferred his contacts from one Mac to another—he used Apple's Migration Assistant (/Applications/Utilities) to do so—but found that his contacts were missing in action on the new Mac. He then attempted to import a file that ended with this *.abcdp* extension, and he achieved a similar result—bubkes. I suggested that he try one of the following approaches.

Launch Address Book on the old Mac, select all the contacts in it, and drag the highlighted contacts to the desktop to create a vCard file (which has the *.vcf* extension). Copy this file to the new Mac and drag it into Address Book, and the contacts will appear as they should. The only problem with this technique is that you'll lose any groups you've created.

To transfer your contacts and your groups, you'll need to go a different route. If you're moving from Tiger (OS X 10.4) to Leopard, choose File: Back Up Address Book in the Tiger Mac's Address Book. This creates an Address Book archive file. Copy this file to your new Leopard Mac; then, using its version of Address Book, choose File: Import: Address Book Archive. Navigate to the archive you copied from the old Mac, and click on Open. You'll be warned that any contacts you currently have will be replaced with the contacts from the archive. As you've got nothing in Address Book, go ahead.

If you're trying to move contacts between two Leopard Macs, you'll find that Leopard's Address Book doesn't have this Back Up command. Instead, export your contacts to an Address Book archive by choosing File: Export: Address Book Archive.

ICON BY PAUL HOWALT

Reinstall OS X Programs

Q: Last year I had significant problems with Apple's iCal. I was so dissatisfied that I deleted it entirely and installed Mozilla's free Sunbird calendar program (macworld.com/3440) instead. Now I'm wondering if it's possible to download a new, hopefully improved, version of iCal.

Jerry Sweeney

A: Since iCal comes bundled with OS X, the only way to obtain a new version is to upgrade your version of the operating system—move from Tiger to Leopard, for example. But even if it's not time for you to do a major system upgrade, you can get back the version of iCal you originally had (and then use Software Update to bring it up to snuff).

Fortunately, you needn't reinstall the entire operating system to do so. Both the Tiger and the Leopard Installer discs

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

5 Speed Tricks

There's no such thing as a Mac that's too fast. With this in mind, let's look at some simple ways to get more speed. (For even more ideas, see "Essential Mac Maintenance," page 52.)

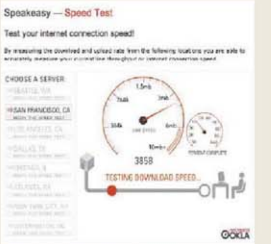
1 **Add RAM** More RAM means your Mac will spend less time writing information that might have been stored in RAM to a hard drive.

2 **Get a Bigger Hard Drive** When your hard drive hits about 90 percent capacity, your Mac slows way down. If your drive is too full, get a bigger one. If you have an internal drive, attach an external USB or FireWire drive and off-load some of the startup drive's data to the external drive.

3 **Up Your Internet Access** We spend increasing amounts of time on the Internet. For instance, we surf the Web, send and retrieve e-mail, download software updates, access Internet-based help files, and use Web-based programs such as Google Docs. Pay for a faster Internet connection, and your Mac is going to feel faster in a variety of ways. Test your connection speed with Speakeasy's Speed Test, at www.speakeasy.net/speedtest (see "Connection Test").

4 **Clean Up Your Browser** A Web browser packed with extensions or with a bloated history file and cache can feel very poky. If you're using Mozilla Firefox and have been a little too free with installing extensions, remove the ones you don't use. If Apple's Safari is excessively slow, and restarting it doesn't make it faster, consider clearing its history (History: Clear History) and emptying its cache (Safari: Empty Cache).

5 **Clear Off Your Desktop** If you have dozens of files sitting on your desktop, you'll find that the Finder is much spunkier after you've filed them away.



Speakeasy — Speed Test

Test your internet connection speed!

Connection Test Web sites such as Speakeasy let you test your broadband connection's speed.

include an Optional Installs installer. You'll find it at the root level of the Tiger Installer disc and in the Optional Installs folder on the Leopard Installer disc. Launch this installer and click on Continue until you reach the Custom Install screen. Click on the triangle next to Applications, select the iCal option, and then click on the Install button.

You can use this technique to reinstall other bundled programs as well. On both the Tiger and the Leopard Installer discs, the Custom Install screen's Applications area includes options for Address Book, iCal, iChat, iTunes, Mail, Oxford Dictionaries, Safari, and X11.

If you would like to reinstall a program that isn't found in the Custom Install screen—something from the Utilities folder, for example—you can use CharlesSoft's $20 Pacifist 2.5 (★★★★★; macworld.com/3574). Insert your Mac OS X Installer disc. Download Pacifist and launch it. In the window that appears, click on the Open Apple Install Discs button. A window will appear, offering you the single choice of looking at the OSInstall package. Click on OK.

Pacifist will churn away for a bit, and then you'll see a window titled OSInstall.mpkg. In this window, you can dig down through the hierarchy of folders to find what you seek, or you can enter the name of what you're after in the Find field and press return. The drawer that appears lists the names of matching files.

To install an item, click on the Install button in the upper left corner of the window. You'll be prompted for your administrator password. Enter it and click on OK, and the item will be installed in its proper location on your Mac's hard drive.

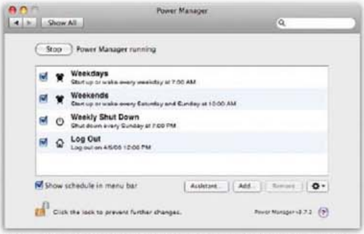
Make Startup Scheduling More Flexible

Q: I have a physical limitation that makes it difficult for me to manually start my iMac. I use the Schedule feature in the Energy Saver preference pane, but it doesn't allow me to create separate schedules for weekdays and weekends. Is there a way to have multiple schedules?

Brian Silverman

A: Regrettably, you can't do this with OS X's Energy Saver preference pane. But Dragon Systems Software's $29 Power Manager 3 (www.dssw.co.uk) can help. Unlike Energy Saver, Power Manager 3 lets you create schedules for any day and time of the week (see "Powerful Power Manager"). It can handle tasks such as logging you in and out of accounts, putting your computer to sleep, restarting, and shutting down. You can also use it to create onetime events.

Power Manager installs as a System Preferences pane. You configure it via an intuitive assistant (that, granted, requires a fair amount of typing) or by clicking on Add to create single events.



☑ **Weekdays**
Start up or wake every weekday at 7:00 AM

☑ **Weekends**
Start up or wake every Saturday and Sunday at 10:00 AM

☑ **Weekly Shut Down**
Shut down every Sunday at 7:00 PM

☑ **Log Out**
Log out on 4/5/08 12:00 PM

Powerful Power Manager If the Energy Saver preference pane doesn't give you the Mac scheduling options you need, try the more flexible Power Manager program.

Senior Editor **Christopher Breen** is the author of *The iPhone Pocket Guide* and *The iPod and iTunes Pocket Guide*, third edition (both Peachpit Press, 2007).

Bugs & Fixes

BY TED LANDAU

Never-Ending iMac Sleep Does your Intel-based iMac (2006 or later) go to sleep and never wake up? If so, your best bet is to reset the SMC (System Management Controller). To do this, you don't have to perform open-case surgery on the iMac (as you had to with older models). First, simply shut down the computer by holding down the power button. Then unplug *all* peripheral cables—including the USB cord for the keyboard and the power cord—and wait 15 seconds. Finally, reattach the cords and turn the iMac back on. With a bit of luck, all should now be well. Variations of this procedure apply to other Mac models, too (see macworld.com/3519 for details).

Not Really Full Air Disk When you first boot up a MacBook Air, it may erroneously say that its internal disk is full, or that its capacity is much lower than it ought to be. If so, don't bother attempting to repair the disk. Apple claims that the preferred and permanent solution is to erase the disk with Disk Utility, using the Mac OS Extended (Journaled) format. Then use the OS X Install discs that came with the Air to reinstall the erased software. The listed disk size should now be correct.

Word 2008 Crashes Having trouble with Word 2008 crashes? TidBits (www.tidbits.com) reports that you may be able to use an old fix to solve this problem. A corrupt Word Settings (10) file, located in *your user folder*/Library/Preferences folder, may be the culprit. Trash this file, and Word will create a clean new copy the next time you launch the program. This is a well-documented fix that dates back at least as far as Word v. X running on OS X 10.2.

Slow Word 2008 Launching Does Word 2008 take an unusually long time to launch? If so, this trick might speed things up. Select Word: Preferences and click on the General pane. Deselect the WYSIWYG Font And Style Menus and Show Project Gallery At Startup options. Quit the program. It should launch faster next time. Apparently, a font-preview problem is to blame, and Microsoft is expected to fix it in an Office update.

Senior Contributor **Ted Landau** is the founder of MacFixIt (www.macfixit.com) and the author of *Take Control of Troubleshooting Your iPhone* (TidBits Publishing, 2007). Share your problems at bugs@macworld.com or on Macworld.com's Mac 911 forum.

ICONS BY PAUL HOWALT

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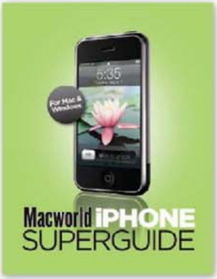
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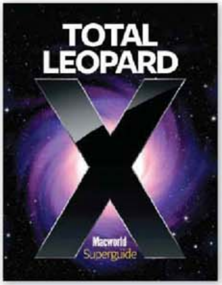
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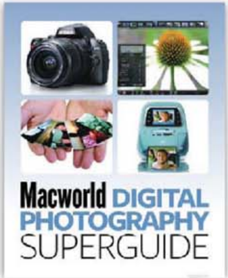
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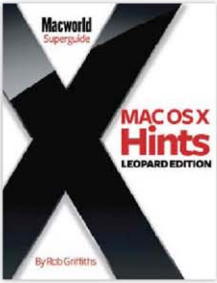
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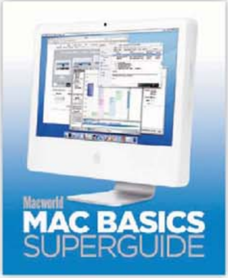
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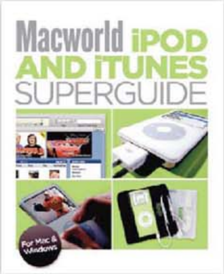
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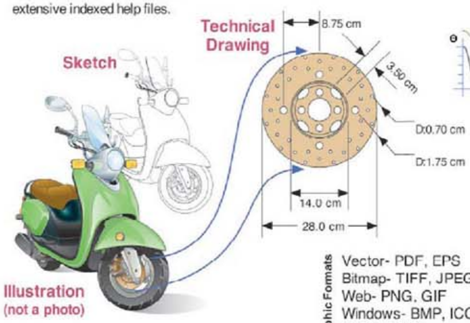

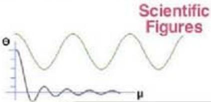

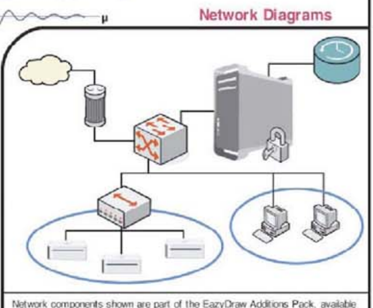

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SPOTLIGHT By Rick LePage

What I Hate about Leopard

After two years of development, the latest OS X should be better

When Apple released Mac OS X 10.1 in 2001, I ditched OS 9 and never looked back. With rare exceptions, if a program didn't run on OS X, I didn't use it. When Apple released 10.2 (Jaguar), 10.3 (Panther), and then 10.4 (Tiger), the first versions went on my Mac immediately. And I was in line right away when Leopard first went on sale last fall.

I know there will always be issues with the first version of a major OS upgrade, but I also know those issues will be resolved in time. The initial versions of Jaguar and Panther, for example, drove me crazy. But by the time Tiger rolled around, Apple seemed to have its quality-control act together. Sure, Tiger ultimately went to 10.4.11, but it rarely caused me headaches.

That has all changed with Leopard: five months of living with 10.5 has turned me into Mr. Crankypants.

The Little Things

It's not that Leopard is all bad; there's a lot about it to like. I couldn't live without Quick Look, for example, one of the best little enhancements Apple has added to OS X in years. And Apple has fixed many of the issues that drove me crazy in the original release (such as the infamous translucent menu bar).

No, what bugs me is the lack of polish throughout Leopard. It has far too many small things that are broken, or that just get in my way daily. Three examples pop to mind:

Constant Requests for My Keychain Password Some people I talk with say they have never run into this problem; others say it happens all the time.

Safari Cookies Some sites remember me, while others—including some (Flickr, Twitter) that should know me well—require that I log in every time.

Print-Job List When my printer has a problem, I have to go to the Print & Fax preference pane and double-click on the printer there to open the job list. Why won't the job list come up automatically when I select the printer background application? Why doesn't this happen on my wife's MacBook? (And why doesn't the Auto Quit option in the printer's menu on the Dock actually work?)

Those are just three relatively minor irritations. There are also entire features that don't work right. Spaces, for example, works just enough to show me how powerful it could be. But it gets confused too often, and I had to turn it off altogether when I installed Microsoft Office 2008. (Office seems to believe that Spaces is evil and needs to be abolished; don't get me started on Office 2008.)

The Last Straw

What really put me over the edge, though, was Back to My Mac. This feature theoretically lets you connect to your home Mac remotely. For months, it simply didn't work. Period. I couldn't find any average (that is, nontechnical) Mac user who had been able to use it successfully.

Five months of living with OS X 10.5 has turned me into Mr. Crankypants.

I went through the documentation on Apple's site, as well as the to Apple support forums. I was even using exactly the same setup Apple describes in its Back to My Mac User Guide. But I still couldn't get it to work. Then out of the blue, after months of frustration, it began to work for me. Nothing changed on my end. It simply started to work.

I could go on. The very morning I was writing this column, Mail decided it was going to quit every time I launched it. I spent almost an hour trying to fix the problem, going back and forth between two Macs, before I cleared it up. At least I was able to fix it. What will happen when my friend down the street, with her brand-new Mac mini, runs into that problem? She's going to spend a lot more than an hour trying to figure it out, if she ever *does* figure it out.

If you talk with longtime Mac fans, or you wade into the discussion forums on Apple.com, you'll know that I'm not the only one who feels this way. And it's not like I'm running strange programs or hacks, either. Most of my work is in Microsoft Office, iLife, iWork, Adobe CS3, and Photoshop Elements.

OS X has been in steady development for nearly a decade. It should be getting better and more stable with age, not the other way around. By the time 10.5.7 or 10.5.8 rolls around, much of the pain that I've been feeling will likely go away. But considering all the time that elapsed between Tiger and Leopard, Apple should have done better. Generally, I think the company does a good job of developing and testing its hardware and software. With Leopard, though, Apple fell down on the job. ☒

Rick LePage is a former *Macworld* editor, and is the editor in chief of the *Photoshop Elements Techniques* newsletter. He also runs the photo printer site Printerville.net.

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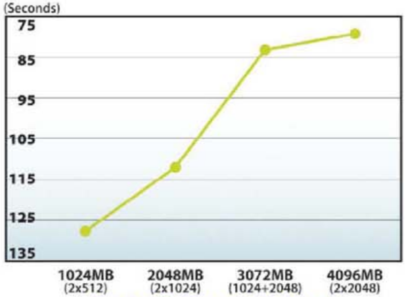

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